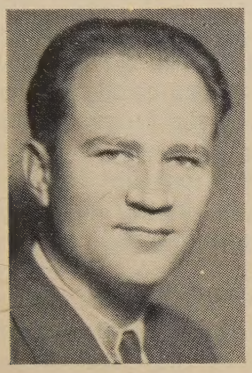
The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



L. Humphrey Walz:

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VOL. XXIII, NO. 5 MAY, 1952

By L. Humphrey Walz

FAITH HEALING AND

IN Jesus' day the people of Judea lived in a sickening atmosphere. They had lost their liberty and with it much of their pride, self-confidence and hope. The vitality of their organized religious life had been severely sapped. As a result, daily frustrations stirred up in them deep anxieties and resentments which in turn created all sorts of inner conflicts, pressures and strains. Some used the ancient religious festivals as occasions for celebrating with overindulgence in food, drink and conviviality. Others turned their spiritual defeats into fault-finding.

The story in John 5:1-14 focuses our attention on an especially pathetic group assembled on the porches of that rather informal infirmary which was built around the pool of Bethesda. These were people whose inner turmoil and dissatisfaction had found expression in physical illness. They were there because they believed that the recurrent troubling of the water was caused by an angel who thus provided enough healing potency to cure the first person who plunged in each time, and the record says that they were healed.

The Will to Get Well

The oldest and best manuscripts of the Gospels eliminate the legend of the angel. But the fact that many were cured calls our attention to the similarities and the contrasts between ordinary faith healing and the healings of Jesus more vividly than any other New Testament story.

Now, as to similarities, both required *the will to get well.* This quality, which physicians and surgeons insist upon as essential to complete recovery, is especially necessary in ordinary faith healing. Those people who crowded the five porches of Bethesda were cured in part because, as their eager scrambling showed, they *wanted* to be well.

Only one, who had been languishing for some 38 years in infirmity, seems to have felt otherwise. He enjoyed ill health and the chance it afforded irresponsibly to find fault with others and order them around without bearing any direct consequences himself. He did not ask Jesus to heal him or even to help him to the edge of the pool. It was Jesus who spoke the first words: "Wilt thou be made whole?" The man avoided the issue by complaining about the people who did not help him, and about the other patients who got into the water first. But this handy smoke screen was quickly dissipated by the friendly, undeceived smile of Christ. Looking at Jesus, he began to feel a warmly surging realization that life held much worth living for, and he began to *want* to get well. That was step number one.

Fervent Belief

The second important step—and similarity—was this: *believing,* fervently and sincerely. If you do not believe in your family physician and the prescriptions he gives you, he and they cannot help you as much as they would otherwise. Belief plays a particularly large part in faith healings. People believe in the healing power of the bones of saints, of amulets, of miraculous medals, of quack patent medicines, of prayer wheels and, in this case, of ordinary water to effect a cure; and even though what they believe is not true, the fact that they believe it ends some of their personal anxieties, turns their inward look outward, and some of the emotional barriers which they have created against God's normal restoration of the body are removed, and actual healing takes place.

The Power of Faith

Jesus too relied upon the belief of the patient as a very important element in his cure. You remember how on one occasion he "did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matt. 13:58). This man, on the other hand, did come to believe in Jesus' power to heal. His was not that fundamental faith in Christ that we consider basic to true Christianity, for when he was asked who had healed him he didn't even know Jesus' name. All he knew was that his friendly interest, radiant personality and calm assurance made him believe in Jesus as he said authoritatively: "Rise, take up thy bed and walk," and he showed his belief by making an effort to get up. Once he was on his feet he showed his

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Christ's power to heal is contrasted with today's faith healing fads

CHRIST'S HEALING

belief that he would remain well by rolling up his mat and carrying it off with him.

But at this point we begin to notice some contrasts between ordinary faith healing and the miracles of Jesus. In the first place, so many "faith cures" are based on belief in something that is not true, and the healing therefore confirms the patient in his false belief, with results ranging from the ridiculous to the tragic. Jesus, on the other hand, always led people to the truth, which the cure helped make an indelible part of the person's life, deepening and blessing it forever.

Second, and most important, is this contrast: ordinary faith healing cures symptoms, whereas Jesus cured the disease that caused them as well. That is most important for us to remember in every phase of human life in this period immediately following the "Aspirin Age," in which people studied every possible means to dull the pain of painful situations, and, when the pain was ended, considered that a cure had been performed even though the fundamental cause remained untouched. We see the tragic results of that in the spheres of politics, commerce, education and religion on local, national and international levels today. Symptoms are brilliantly eliminated but all the time the fundamental disease of our times continues to grow in its virulence and breaks out in greater force elsewhere.

'Sin No More'

When worry gives you a nervous headache, an aspirin can end that symptom, but the basic anxiety stays on. When a resentment toward some fellow worker or phase of your work becomes so powerful that you get indigestion, bicarbonate of soda will give local relief, but it will not stop the hostility from poisoning your life. If tension gives you high blood pressure, a salt-free diet will correct the blood pressure, but not its cause. So Jesus was not satisfied with curing this man's symptoms. He waited and followed him to the quiet of the temple to deal with the heart of the trouble, saying: "Sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee."

"Sin no more." Neurologists, psychiatrists and consulting psychologists are generally agreed that the basic emotional turmoil which leads to the neurotic and hysterical physical ailments that afflict our times can be roughly catalogued as to cause under three broad heads: (1) nervous anxiety, (2) hostility and (3) the sense of guilt that accompanies them both.*

Now I should like to use, instead of "hostility," the word "inimicability"—not because I like its clumsiness or because it is rare, but because it begins with the letter "I." Hence, if placed between "sense of guilt" and "nervous anxiety," the initials spell out "sin." Now what is a sense of guilt other than living outside of an awareness of the transforming grace of God? What is inimicability, or hostility, other than excluding the love of God from our human relations? What is nervous anxiety except living with inadequate trust in God? And what do these all add up to but the sum total of sin?

The Power of Christ to Heal

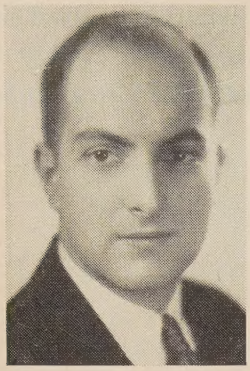
Jesus got to the heart of it in the words, "Sin no more." Speaking with kindly directness in the midst of the temple he gave this man a sense of the love of neighbor that makes hostility weaken and vanish away, of the love of God that eliminates anxiety, and of the combination that lifts one's burden of guilt.

Behold, he stands at the door—at the door of our day and the door of our individual hearts—ready to bring to our times, and to our personal lives as well, that "love divine all loves excelling" that conquers our disease at its inner root and replaces it with the peace that passeth all understanding for all who will open to his knock.

Whose Business?

Maybe you think that mental health is the business of a psychologist giving a test to a juvenile delinquent or a psychiatrist trying to cure a patient in a mental hospital. But these are only the last-ditch battles for mental health. The real campaign begins with the security of a baby in his crib, his chance to grow in independence and friendliness, first at home, later in school and in a job. Whose business is this? Yours and mine, of course. Mental Health Week is to remind us that there are people in every state working for this cause. They need our help.—*Benjamin Spock, M.D., Director, Child Health Institute, Rochester, Minnesota.*

*This far too facile summary should be followed up by reading Chapter III, "Guilt as Fact and Feeling," in Lewis J. Sherrill's *Guilt and Redemption* (John Knox Press, 1945).



Mercy for the Mentally Ill

By Francis Kenneth Steeves

Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.—Mark 5:19.

MENTAL ILLNESS ranks as one of the foremost problems of our day. In a recent article in the Christian Century, John B. Oman points out that eight million individuals in this country are suffering from mental illness of one kind or another, and that one out of every 20 will spend some time in a mental institution and one out of every 10 will need psychiatric treatment. At least a share of this suffering can be meliorated by a better understanding of this illness, the adoption of preventive measures and the encouragement of early treatment. The account in the Gospels of Jesus' healing of the Gerasene demoniac provides excellent insight to deal with this critical concern.

The Gerasene was called a demoniac in line with earlier beliefs that mental illness resulted from possession by demons. Today he would be classified as a manic-depressive phychotic. The record informs us that he was given to ceaseless activity without regard to day and night, ranging the hillsides, talking and screaming, cutting himself. He had been taken into custody and confined with chains, but by frenzied strength he always managed to escape. The reaction of the Gerasene to Jesus presents a clear picture of the fundamentally spiritual cause of mental illness.

The Nature of the Illness

When Jesus approached him, the hapless Gerasene threw himself before the Master and pleaded: "I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not." His primary concern was the fear of torment. His focusing outlook on life was an expectation of mistreatment. This outlook, in varying degrees of intensity, is typical of all who have emotional and behavior problems. Karen Horney expresses it: "The relevant factor in the genesis of neurosis is . . . all those adverse influences which make a child feel helpless and defenseless, and which make him conceive the world as potentially menacing."

Translated into the language of the Christian tradition this statement says: The understanding becomes darkened when by his experiences an individual begins to believe that God is menacing rather than merciful, an adversary rather than an advocate, a devil rather than God. This unbelief leads to "alienation from the life of God," estrangement from "the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." To the degree that this spirit prevails in an individual he becomes lawless (exercising vengeance), or submissive (hiding his talent in fear), or intemperate (driven by an inner hunger), or mentally ill (inner distortion and confusion).

The reaction of the Gerasene to the growing sense of menace took the form of destructive violence and a repudiation of society's standards. To gain support for his lone defiance of the wrathful god, his imagination conceived a delusion of power. When Jesus asked him his name, he called himself "Legion." He had identified himself with the force of six thousand soldiers which constituted a Roman legion. In any of our mental institutions we find those who attempt to gain prestige or power by identifying themselves with Napoleon or Kate Smith or even God. When any one of us fails to have a vital experience of God's love mediated directly to us, we make our own gods. When our gods prove false, we go under clinging to them, not knowing where else to turn.

Men and Machines

None of the Synoptic accounts of the Gerasene's healing suggests the particular experiences which accumulated to make him feel that God's world is a hopelessly menacing place. However, we are given a glimpse of the social climate which inevitably would produce myriads of such experiences.

At the time of the healing a herd of swine were frightened and stampeded down the slope into the sea, where they drowned. According to the conception of the time the people said that the demons left the Gerasene and entered the swine. Since Jesus healed the man, they reasoned that he must have given permission for the demons to go into the swine. While they marveled at the restoration of mental health to this man, they were concerned primarily with their material loss. Instead of requesting Jesus to bring health to the many sufferers of their countryside, they begged

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him to leave their coasts. They valued their swine more than their people. Is it any wonder that the Gerasene got the deep impression that he was only a pawn in the universe and must fight against his destiny?

To see some of the factors in our own social climate will make us aware of the same antagonistic forces that can play upon us today. In the article referred to, Oman cites the fact that for every $2,500 spent on industrial research, only $65 is spent on medical research and only $1 on psychiatric research. Here is striking evidence that machines are considered more valuable than men. It has long been true that the inventor of gadgets receives far greater compensation than do those who train the intelligence or mold character. In our competitive, impersonal and materialistic society the stage is set for the kind of scenes which can make life appear a tragedy with God as the chief adversary. The values and spirit of our lives either add to a social climate saturated with unbearable threat or counteract such a climate with a vital faith that God is *for* us. One alert psychiatrist has said: "The care of the mental patient begins by caring *for* the patient."

Prevention and Treatment

The departing word of Jesus to the Gerasene gives us a clue as to what was involved in the healing. Feeling intensely grateful, the man requested permission to accompany Jesus wherever he went. But the Master urged him: "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." In dealing with the man, Jesus had given him an experience of God's mercy, to displace the conception of God as a menace. Having received the directive from the citizens to leave their coasts, Jesus wanted someone to impart the true meaning of God's nature to the people to displace the prevailing conception that they were children of wrath. The account tells us that the Gerasene "went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and all men marveled."

Those of us who have had an underlying experience of the mercy of God can help to leaven society and give some relief to individuals. Dr. John Rosen, who has had brilliant success in treating schizophrenics, has found that the therapist "must make up for the tremendous deficit of love experienced in the patient's life." Few of us have the skill and understanding to mediate love to the worst sufferers. They must be cared for by trained technicians. But as individuals and in the fellowship of the Church, we can be pervading influences of healing, prevention and support for those who are recovering.

Most sufferers, like the Gerasene, will beg to be left alone in their misery, fearing that further contacts can bring only more torment. All too often the church is the principal place to avoid. Here, they may be tormented by scathing censure for having missed their high calling. One of our leading theologians who trains many ministers and speaks frequently at large ecclesiastical gatherings is fond of saying that psychiatry uses the mercy of God but repudiates the judgment of God. This theologian overlooks the stern fact that all of us sinners and spiritual sufferers have already experienced the judgment of God. But we have missed the mark to the extent that we have been ignorant of his grace, which alone can induce a saving faith.

Centers of Mercy

Not long ago I sat beside a 16-year-old patient in the occupational therapy department of a mental hospital. The therapist, was trying to persuade the young man to undertake some project, with the thought in mind that achievement, even in a small way, might give the patient a little faith in the ultimate nature of things. However, he sat listless under every inducement to mold clay figures or etch patterns on glass or paint pictures in oils. Finally he accepted crayons and a sheet of paper. Instead of sketching a picture he printed on the paper in large letters the matter that lay heaviest on his heart: "ALMIGHTY GOD HAVE MERCY ON ME." We can help to make our churches centers of mercy rather than of judgment, to which sufferers will be attracted for healing.

Jesus gave his disciples a challenging commission: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." Sometimes the psychiatrist has proved a more realistic believer than the churchman. One of the most eminent of psychotherapists today, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, considers "love and patience as the cardinal attitudes in therapy." Where can we learn better this spirit than from Jesus and in fellowship with those who are truly his followers? While only the carefully trained can learn the skills of psychotherapy, all can accept God's mercy abundantly demonstrated in Christ and can become centers of encouragement and health for others.

A Growing Challenge

Together, we can continue the healing ministry of Jesus by persuading our churches to make available to pastor and people alike a minister thoroughly trained in dealing with the difficult ills of the spirit. Alive to the need, some churches are combining in small groups to share the cost of a minister-counselor. Denominational groups and councils of churches are beginning to employ minister-executives who are trained in the promotion and administration of programs dealing directly and personally with the human spirit, as Jesus did. The growing problem challenges us today to remedy this serious deficiency in the ministry of the church—"The *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your *spirit*."

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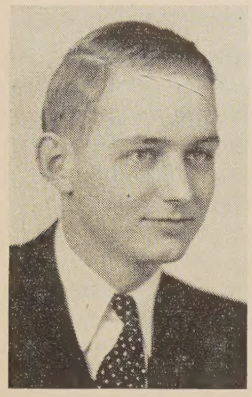
There's No Place Like Home

By Harold L. Lunger

But when he came to himself he said . . . I will arise and go to my father.—Luke 15:17.

THERE'S no place like home! Those are our sentiments today as we celebrate the Festival of the Christian Home. They were apparently the sentiments of the Prodigal Son as well.

After he had turned his back upon his home and everything it stood for, gone into a far country, dissipated himself and squandered his share of his father's money; after he had tried to support himself by tending pigs (a job humiliating above all others for a Jew); after he had experienced hunger so great he would gladly have eaten the pods he was feeding the pigs —then it was his thoughts turned homeward.



It wasn't birds singing in the olive tree or the sunlight in his mother's hair that he longed for. As he ate his own meager portion, the prodigal thought increasingly of the meals of home. How good they would taste! He could just see the family —hired men and all— sitting down to a well laden table. And here he was perishing with hunger. If he could only go back—but of course he could not! He would be ashamed to return now. Still, the thought kept invading his mind.

Finally his hunger became so great that he pocketed his pride. He would go back and ask his father to take him on as a hired man. Then at least he could eat.

Our Physical Hungers

There's no place like home to satisfy the physical hungers of men—our need for food, clothes and shelter. From the time of Plato to Edward Bellamy and Lenin, philosophers and social theorists have dreamed dreams of a society in which the community or state would take over all the functions of the family—erect barracks or hotels for sleeping purposes, set up cafeterias for the preparation and serving of food, and establish nurseries for the care of children. But such efforts have never succeeded, and probably never will. For there is literally no place like home to provide the right physical environment and to meet the basic physical needs of human beings, especially of growing children.

When we have said all this, what of those families which must live in slum tenements or doubled up with the in-laws? What of parents who are unable to provide nourishing food, warm clothes and other material needs, because of inadequate income?

It is nothing less than hypocrisy for Christians to sit in church on Sunday and wax sentimental over "home, sweet home," and then assume no responsibility for social forces which create such unwholesome conditions. Too much of our thinking of home and mother is like that—an escape from life.

If it is true that there is no place like home to satisfy the physical needs of men, then we Christians must do some serious thinking and take some courageous action to enable families near and far to satisfy those needs. If this means modernizing the building codes in our larger cities or more extensive programs of public housing, we dare not stop until these have been achieved. If it means a higher minimum wage or federal health insurance, if it means more economic aid and fewer arms to Europe and Asia, we must work toward these ends. This is quite different from the state taking over the functions of the family, as some social philosophers have proposed. It is rather to strengthen and undergird the family, making it possible for the home to perform its own proper functions.

Even though the Prodigal Son thought first of food, I am sure he longed for other things as well when his thoughts turned homeward. He must also have remembered how his mother used to tuck him in bed as a child, the time he and his brother went fishing together, and his father's strength and comradeship. Alongside the hunger for bread, there must have been an even deeper hunger for the love he had known within the family circle.

Emotional Security

There's no place like home to provide the affection and emotional security that every individual needs. It is not enough for parents to provide well balanced meals for their children and clean airy rooms for play and sleep. Love and companionship, understanding and a sense of belonging are just as essential.

Washington Irving writes appreciatively of "that delicious home feeling" which he said was the most valuable gift his parents gave him. It is one of the most precious gifts any parents can

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give their children—far more valuable than bonds or real estate. A home that imparts this feeling-tone to those who grow up in it has not failed—even though it may produce a prodigal child or two. For wherever he goes the son—or daughter—will carry with him a yearning for home and all it stands for. He can never be completely happy or satisfied as long as his back remains turned upon home's ideals and purposes. Some day he too may come to himself, see the folly and hollowness of his life, and return to the faith and the ways of home.

Here again is a challenge to the church. If we as Christians are concerned about wholesome family life, we must take an interest in all that helps parents achieve emotional maturity and a satisfying marital adjustment, so that they can provide emotional security for their children. We must be concerned about all the personal and social factors that produce anxiety, competitiveness and frustration in modern life. We must endeavor to bring to all parents a vital religious faith, a sense of at-home-ness with God and the universe.

When the prodigal thought of home, he thought of more than food and affection. He was moved also by the family's religious faith and experience. Though he had tried to forget it, though he had flaunted it, the sense of right and wrong which he had acquired from his parents remained with him still. As he rehearsed in his mind the approach that he would make to his father, he admitted, "I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." A home that gives its members such an ethical sense has not failed.

School of Christian Living

But there must have been still further memories—recollections of other times when he had sinned and his parents, with patience and wise understanding, had forgiven him and given him another chance. The prodigal was correct; he no longer had any *right* to expect his father to forgive him. Yet there must have been in his heart some *hope,* on the basis of past experience, that his father would do just that.

When he returned, the father did forgive all and welcomed him back as if nothing had come between them. But that is not the whole story. The older brother was bitter and resentful. He showed none of the forgiving, redeeming spirit of his parents. The prodigal faced the task of winning back his brother's affection.

So it always is in family living. We find there some of the finest demonstrations of Christian compassion and love. Yet in the home, situations arise which try our faith and demand all our skill in getting along with others. There's no place like home to experience the reality of Christian forgivness and to learn the art of Christian living.

There is another challenge to homemakers. Parents must be mediators of the truths and principles of both democracy and Christianity—respect for personality, abiding by group decisions, shared experiences of worship, concern for others outside the home, and family participation in the life of the worshiping community, the church. Home is where most of these things—or their opposites—are learned.

Much of the learning that goes on in the home, of course, is rather casual and seemingly unplanned. It comes as the result of the interaction of personalities, ideas and ideals, and of the vicissitudes and necessities of everyday living. It helps, however, to have a focus for the family's life where Christian ideals are consciously lifted up and celebrated and where common problems are frankly faced in a democratic fashion.

Family Night

One family does it this way* They agreed that they had not been sharing sufficiently the common interests of the home, so they set aside one night every week as family night. Nothing is permitted to interfere. The five children in the family—from six months to sixteen years—participate with their parents. The baby's participation is limited to observation. Susan, aged five, lights the candles.

The leader for the evening then takes his place at the head of the table. Devotions come first. Then follows a "Court of Grievance" at which the week's accumulation of peeves is aired. Older sister may express her opposition to Jimmy's listening in on her conversations on the extension phone, Jimmy may complain that Susan takes his comic books without asking for them, or the parents may comment on the untidiness of the boys' rooms.

Next comes a period for the exchange of "Compliments." Each member of the family has opportunity to commend any of the others for kindnesses or achievements either within or beyond the line of household duties. "Coming Events" provides opportunity to plan the next picnic, outing or other family event. During "Inspiration" time the leader reads a favorite bit of poetry, a story or a choice passage from the Bible. Sometimes this is related to the special concerns of the hour. Once when Susan had been retailing family news too freely among the neighbors, her father read a passage on the wisdom of keeping counsel, and followed it up by giving Susan a pitcher he had picked up on one of his trips—a "little pitcher with big ears," big ears for listening but a small mouth for giving out. This, of course, is a game at which others can play. For once when the family had been insisting that Jimmy get a haircut, he read with some satisfaction the story of Samson and Delilah and followed it with some not so subtle comments on the dangers of too many haircuts.

"Benediction" and "Refreshments" complete the hour together. Then while mother puts baby to bed, the dishes are washed. Reading and playing games follow until nine, when Family Night is

*Adapted from "Family Night at Our House," by Mercedes J. Stewart, *Christian Herald,* May 1948.

officially over. The younger children go to bed, the older ones do their homework.

So one family seeks to give conscious guidance and expression to the learning process which goes on in their home by linking fun and fellowship with serious discussion, democratic planning and group worship.

The home is far more important in the teaching of practical, everyday religion than either the school or the church. It is the basic institution of society. If this be true, then another responsibility rests upon the church—to provide inspiration and guidance for its members so that they may make their homes true schools of Christian living.

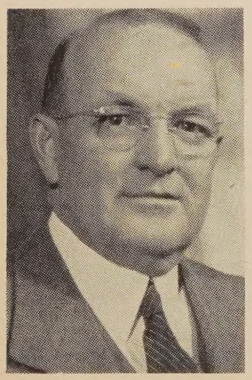
There's no place like home to provide satisfaction for the basic physical needs of life. There's no place like home to provide the affection and emotional security which every individual requires. There's no place like home to learn to live together as members of a democratic group earnestly seeking the Christian way of life. Yes—there's no place like home!

I Believe in the Christian Home

By Herman L. Turner

You must impress these instructions on your children, and talk about them when you are sitting at home, and when you go off on a journey, when youlie down and when you get up.—Deuteronomy 6:7.

I BELIEVE in the home because it is the first and greatest among institutions. It is divinely established and is recognized as being the main source of our country's true greatness. It is the basic unit of our civilization. The family is democracy's greatest school. We do not believe that the major problem before the nation today is housing. It is a great need, to be sure. But housing is not our number one problem. Our number one problem is the lack of Christian homes.



You and I know that there is a great deal of difference between a house and a Christian home. We have seen houses built in a few days, but you can't build a Christian home in such a short time. You can't make a Christian home by hanging up a wall motto, "God Bless Our Home." The Christian home is built on love. God put in man the urge for companionship, which finds satisfaction in the mating experience. The Christian home is where two or more people live together in the spirit of Christ.

What are the products of the Christian home? They are discipline, sharing, corporate unity, the deep and abiding conviction of safety in love that "forgets and forgives," the technique for multiplying joys, and the capacity to sing in the face of sorrow, loss and death. There's an atmosphere about the Christian home that gives color to life's motivations and relations and also builds life's imponderables: loyalty, imagination, joy, laughter and love. And these imponderables are sustained by reverence, modesty, tact, delicacy and common sense.

We need not remind you that all is not well with the home. This has been brought about in part by changing conditions. In Babylon, a tablet was found a few years ago which they claim is some five thousand years old. On this tablet they found this statement, "Alas! times are not what they were." And you say, "How true!"

Times Are Changing

The home life of my boyhood day has passed. Perhaps you are too young to be aware of some of the changes that have taken place in the home in the past half-century. The churn has vanished and instead we have the public creamery; the old-fashioned cookstove has given way to the electric range; the factory has replaced the loom and the knitting needle; the washtub is about extinct and now we have the public laundry and the launderette; the old kitchen is about gone and we have the kitchenette; and the dinette takes the place of the dining room. Things are not what they used to be!

We are conscious of these changes and they have put the home under a great strain. The two world wars of our day have left their impact on the home. War's first casualty is the home: separated and broken families, hasty marriages and youth exposed to unwholesome excitement. The home is in ferment. Hence, divorce has reached the dangerous proportion of one failure out of every three marriages, parental authority has waned, juvenile delinquency has increased and crime continues to grow.

We are living at a time when the total resourcefulness of our homes is needed for building a better world to live in. The millions of homes across the nation are mighty potentials in achieving this goal. I am concerned about the way we live and act in our homes. The influence of your home and

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mine, and our neighbor's whether it be a palace, an apartment or a humble mountain cabin, can either support or hamper these efforts for making a better world. A home characterized by love, cooperation and the Christian spirit has untold power for good. A home lacking in these qualities adds to the conflict and bitterness of the world. You see why I am concerned about the kind of homes we have.

Builders of a New World

Our observation reveals that unstable families creat a "vicious circle" by sending into the world maladjusted persons who make trouble for themselves and others, aggravate social evils and when they marry set up other unstable families. How largely nervous and emotional ailments, delinquency and crime stem back to such homes is a matter of common knowledge. But you and I know that there is also a "blessed circle" in the life of wholesome families. They are happy in themselves and characterized by mental and emotional health. They are cooperative, self-respecting and considerate of others. They practice democracy at home and send out currents of good into the world. They are the builders of our new world. In their turn their offspring achieve a high average of success in the homes which they establish. In the fullness of time God honored the home with his visible presence. Bethlehem and Nazareth carry divine significance. The child Jesus lifted the home to new dignity. A Christian home is next to heaven.

Let me ask you a question: What kills the atmosphere of the home? You are ready to answer: harsh words, a critical spirit, unfair judgments, the absence of affectionate fellowship. These destructive things did not prevail in the beginning of your married life. Why should they be there now?

Do you remember the day of your marriage? Of course you do. You recall that the minister said in part:

> By his apostles, he has instructed those who enter into this relation to cherish a mutual esteem and love; to bear with each other's infirmities and weaknesses; to comfort each other in sickness, trouble and sorrow; in honesty and industry to provide for each other, and for their household in temporal things; to pray for and encourage each other in the things which pertain to God; and to live together as the heirs of the grace of life.

Have you forgotten your vows? You said, "I do promise and covenant, before God and these witnesses, to be thy loving and faithful husband or wife, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live." Have we been faithful to our marriage vows?

In Holy Baptism

I believe that marriage is a holy covenant between two souls "pledged to revere one another, to face life's tasks together, to be each other's complement, to build a home and to shield and love the offspring of their union."

There is another experience I want to call to your attention. Do you remember the Sunday you brought your firstborn child to the altar of the church and there dedicated him to God? What a solemn occasion! The minister asked you these questions:

> Do you accept, for yourself and for your child, the covenant of God, and therein consecrate your child to him? Do you promise to instruct him in the principles of our holy religion, as contained in the Scriptures, to pray with him and for him, and to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

As parents of the child, you answered in the affirmative.

Have you been faithful in undergirding your child with a religious training? The religious training of our children is essential to the soundness of the nation. The nation will never be any better than our homes. A revival of religious instruction in the home would be our sure guide to a just and lasting peace.

We are convinced that we must make a larger place for Christian instruction in our homes. What we do and think as parents about the religious training of our children was never so important. Religious leaders are one in saying that the tragedy of crime in our country has a direct connection with the decline of religion in the home. The home is the smallest unit of society but it is the key to the whole order of society.

There is one thing more I want to say about your home and mine. The cooperative spirit must be dominant. There is no place for selfishness in the home. Life is at its best when we live for others. Group life implies duties and restraints. Parents and children must not only work together but also play together. I am grateful that I had the privilege of growing up in a home of nine children. There I learned to live with the few as a preparation for living with the many. I know by experience that parents have to spend time with their children, enter into their play life, endeavor to be an example to them. If a father goes by the way of the golf course on Sunday morning, he need not expect his son to go by the way of the Sunday school and church.

Backacke or Heartache?

A mechanic, after a hard day's work, was seen by a friend of his, catching a baseball with his son. The friend stopped and looked over the fence and said, "Bill, aren't you tired?" "Why, yes, I am. Of course, I'm tired." "Well, what under the sun are you doing that for?" "Oh," he said, "I'd rather have the backache now than the heartache later on."

I have never known parental authority to break down in a home where parents have been faithful in teaching religion by both precept and example. Our children will give us proper respect and obedience when we conscientiously maintain a leadership in the worship and religious instruction of our homes. This is a challenge no parent can afford to neglect.

The marks of a Christian home are: First, Christian parents—belonging to a church, active participation and regular attendance; second, fam-

ily worship—reading the Bible, daily devotions, Christian literature and books and choice music; third, an atmosphere that gives motivation to the oneness of life.

I believe in the scriptural injunction which you have heard quoted all your life: "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Joshua, an associate of Moses, possessed a deep religious conviction. This is what he said about his home: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." He recognized the fact that religion, morality and patriotism had their beginning in the home. If our homes are to be constructive forces in the building of a better world, then we too will join Joshua in saying: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." What a potential heritage to pass on to our children and grandchildren!

The Amazement of Pentecost

By Fred Zimmerman

And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.—Acts 2:12-13.

THERE have always been two classes of people in the world: those who have the capacity to be astonished and amazed, and those who have the capacity only to mock and sneer. It's a very curious thing that the gospel of Christ has always called forth the response of both classes. People were either surprised and overwhelmed by Jesus, or they opposed him. Either they said that he was a prophet or else they said that he had a demon. He was either a saint or a fool, either God or the Devil. Wherever he went, Jesus called forth the extremes of reaction. Whatever he did and said aroused men. When he came into view all indifference, all lukewarmness, all complacency took wing. Here was a man with power.

It is to the eternal credit of the multitudes, of the common folk, that they were the ones to express astonishment. The simple, uncultured, illiterate, humble people were drawn to him. Think of the shepherds that night when the message of God's love was proclaimed by the angels from heaven. They were struck with awe and wonder. But Herod, when he heard the news, was filled with rage and terror. The disciples too were continually filled with amazement. When Jesus calmed the troubled waves on that never to be forgotten night, the disciples were like little children in their awe and astonishment. Even Jesus' parents were amazed. I don't think any mother was ever more constantly amazed over her son than Mary was over Jesus. Her heart became filled with many things. But she had to keep things in her heart because her friends and the townspeople did not share her reaction. When Jesus came home to preach in the synagogue for the first time there was much curiosity. But there was more skepticism and denial than anything else. The people of his home town did not wonder at Jesus; they criticized: "Is he not the son of Joseph and Mary, and are not these his brothers?"

The Power of Pentecost

The power to evoke such extreme response did not die with the death of Jesus. It became the power of the resurrection. Easter Day is a confusion of adjectives. Fright, excitement, amazement, Peter and John running to the tomb in surprise and perplexity—this was Easter Day, crammed full with marvel and expectancy. "Greater things than these shall you see," Jesus said to his disciples. They marveled at that; for what could be greater than that Jesus lives? But greater things they did see! Things which eye had never seen nor ear ever heard.

For the power of the resurrection became the power of Pentecost—the power of the Holy Ghost descending in tongues of fire upon the multitude gathered together. And again the picture is confused with adjectives, with quivering verbs attempting to describe what happened. "A rushing, mighty wind; cloven tongues like as fire; people speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance"—this was all that could be set down to show the power of the victorious gospel descending upon the world of men. Again, there were two reactions. Some were amazed when they saw and heard of it; they could only exclaim, "What does this mean?" Others sneered, "These men are filled with new wine."

But Peter disputed their charge. We are not drunk, he said. "This is the power of God who works through miracles and wonders and signs performed among you; the power of God came through Jesus Christ who was betrayed by you wicked men and nailed to a cross. You shall not

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hear or see the end of it! For death could not hold him. He shall forever challenge you." Then the greater wonders began. The apostles, those men who had been weak and almost sick with despair, those same men began to perform wonders and signs greater even than Jesus had performed.

The Church's Survival

That was the beginning of Christianity. That is Christianity today still. Wherever the gospel is alive, it is alive with power. The most amazing thing of all is the Christian church herself—an institution like every other institution, subject to the same threats and corruptions, yet fundamentally undefeated and uncorrupted. Civilizations have risen and fallen, and it seemed as if the church were destined to fall with some of them. But always the church experienced a new birth and survived. In medieval times, the church survived the collapse of feudalism and carried on in an entirely different kind of society. The Orthodox Church of Russia, for instance, was once identified with tsardom, and when the Bolshevist revolution came, the church was overthrown along with its political partner. But today, as D. R. Davies has reminded us in his *Down Peacock's Feathers,* the Orthodox Church has come alive. The Lutheran Church in Germany on the whole yielded to the pressures of nazism; but there was a saving remnant, and today the church in Germany is again teaching us many lessons by its increasing witness. The Christian faith and gospel command the wonder of men anew when the Holy Spirit works through their lives. Where the gospel is alive it is an explosive force, inciting to either wonder or hatred but constantly moving and challenging.

You can test how effective your Christianity is by examining the reactions of other people to your life. If what you say and do evokes only a moderate kind of response, there is something lacking. It is always appropriate to ask ourselves, Have we received the Holy Spirit? We can learn a lesson from some of the smaller sects in the field of religion. They often ask whether we have received the Holy Spirit, and we feel a bit foolish when the question is raised. But isn't it a fact that their enthusiasm and earnestness have captured the lives of a great many people?

After all, people are attracted only by those things which attract. They are attracted by science because science has been able to produce so many marvels. They are attracted by lodges and secret organizations because these have been able to surround their activities with a certain awe and wonder. They are attracted by bigness in all its forms because bigness overwhelms.

Spiritual Zeal

A lady recently said that she doesn't attend church because the church has nothing interesting to offer! But the church *has* something to offer—far more than any other institution on this earth. And yet her statement may have a great deal of truth in it. For much of our Christian faith and practice is dull and petty and lacks the fire of spiritual zeal. Where the gospel is present, where it really lives, it becomes revolutionary. It excites, it dares, it revolutionizes. Halford Luccock tells an anecdote about a minister who sent his books to the bindery to be rebound. Among them was a copy of the New Testament. When the books were returned, the minister was surprised to find one with the letters "TNT" on the back. On looking inside he saw that it was the New Testament. The binder did not have room to print the words, so he simply printed the first letters. The Gospel *is* TNT. It is an explosive force, it is dynamite! It is the kind of power that can cause our world to be truly *amazed.*

A Pastoral Prayer

By Alvin D. Johnson

Minister, First Baptist Church, Middletown, Conn.

OUR Father, thou who art from everlasting to everlasting the same, we turn to thee, the infinite, the good, the pure, the redemptive, the merciful. We lift our being to thee from our finiteness, our weakness, our follies and shortcomings. O God, we thank thee that thou hast given us the upward look, the desire somehow to overcome our failings and our disharmony, and the unhappiness and disquiet which beset us. Teach us the divine truth that peace and creativity, wisdom and love, meaning and fulfillment are in thee and thee alone. Thou has made us restless until we rest in thee. So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to thy wisdom, the only reality in life, and thus achieve the joys now of that fellowship with thee which is eternal.

In this solemn hour of worship, we would direct our minds from weakness to strength, from discord to harmony, from sin to holiness, from strife to love. We would gird ourselves with thy truth and face the many tasks of the coming week with confidence and trust, with wisdom and kindness, with a sense of gratitude for our high calling as children of thine. We thank thee that thou hast broken the shackles of sin and sorrow and planted within us the consuming desire to be fellow workers with thee. Keep our minds stayed upon thee, our Strength and Peace.

In the coming week, help us to mount up over those things that would unman us, fill us with fear, and cause us to lower the standards of Christ in thought or word or deed. Help us to run with patience and not be weary. Through Christ our Lord, whose mind we would have in us this week and always in order that his Kingdom may come in all of its fullness. Amen.

Managing Our Fears and Anxieties

By Stephen C. Peabody

I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Psalm 23:4.

IT is no accident that modern sermons come back so often to the problem of our fears and anxieties, for every one of us will agree that it is one of the persistent problems. Ours is called the "age of fear." Our scientific generation with its increase of luxuries and literacy is destroying many of the fears that sprang from primitive superstitions and ignorance. But when Benjamin Franklin and his kite showed men about electricity and how to protect our homes against lightning, he also released new fears of high tension wires and third rails of electrical trains—on up to the pulverizing fears of the atomic bomb, against which scientists tell us there is no material protection.

Regardless of our politics, we Americans all salute the courage of a young man, stricken with infantile paralysis, who refused to retreat into self-pity and retirement. Coming onto the national scene at a time of fear and crisis, he made an inaugural address as president of the United States which contained this tonic word to his countrymen: "The only thing we have to fear is fear." Later, as the world staggered under the fears and anxieties of war, he met in secret naval rendezvous with a British lion of red courage and purple speech to phrase Four Freedoms that would unite and lift the hearts of men. And the last of these was Freedom from Fear—really the base of all the others. Yes, it's a modern problem.

Our Contemporary

Because of that fact it is interesting to notice that Jesus is our contemporary here as in so many other parts of our living—because of his continuous concern that men face and overcome their fears and anxieties. Thirty-seven times in the brief record of his life he speaks of it. Recall his healing words to men and women sick and in pain: "Be not afraid, only believe." Recall his words that calmed not only the panic fears of his friends in a storm, but seemed to calm the storm itself! Recall his words to his disciples overcome with a new vision of life on the Mount of Transfiguration, "Arise and be not afraid!" And his words on that last night, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," were born of the sharp loneliness of denial, betrayal and, later, death.

Jesus was also keenly aware of the paralyzing influence of these fears that are focused on the uncertain future. We call them worries or anxieties—when we borrow fears ahead of time, as if we did not have enough fears already. "Be not anxious of the morrow—of what ye shall eat, of what ye shall wear . . . Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Clearly it was one of the deep intents of Jesus' own life—and of the gospel through the centuries—to liberate men from the freezing power of fear. And it is to that intent that we bend our thoughts this morning.

It is good for us to realize that part of our difficulty arises because fear and anxiety are not an unmixed curse; they have their necessary and even useful side. Part of the necessary equipment for growing up is for babies to develop a few precautionary fears. They start off with only the fear of a great noise or of being dropped. But if they are to survive in our congested world they must soon learn a wholesome fear of a stove top, of the speed of cars on their street, of the deep water of a lake. And even with adults there is a show of courage that is just naive bravado, which we call foolhardiness. Whenever we are on a dangerous mission we want brave comrades, but not foolhardy ones. From earliest animal life on a wholesome fear is the beginning of wisdom. Angelo Patri once observed, "Education consists in being afraid at the right time."

Danger Signal

Also, fear was evidently given to us not only as a swift and very efficient warning signal to alarm us at the approach of danger. In God's wisdom of the body and its functions, fear also releases certain reserves of energy so that we have additional power to meet emergency needs. A mother runs several miles to get a doctor for her child. Or a familiar boy, chased by a bull, leaps over a fence that he finds later he is unable to scale even though he is taller and stronger. How are we to know whether a sudden danger will freeze us with fright or release adrenaline to strengthen us?

STEPHEN C. PEABODY is pastor of First Congregational Church, San Jose, Calif. A graduate of Union Theological Seminary in 1923, he spent five years as a missionary in China. Before coming to San Jose in 1938, he was the pastor of First Congregational Church and taught sociology at Ripon College, Wis. He is vice-moderator of the Northern California-Western Nevada council of churches and recently received an award from the citizens of San Jose for "promoting understanding and cooperation between minority groups."

Obviously then our first need in managing our fears and anxieties is intelligence—intelligence to discern between panic and the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom. We need to look our fears squarely in the face, to see them as they really are; then to see what causes them—their roots in the past; and third, to see beyond them into the future with balanced perspective.

The heroic pages of history were written by the men and women who faced honestly and valiantly the fearsome things that come to all of us. Parents begin to train their children when they turn on the light to show that the hobgoblins that seemed to be lurking in the darkness just were not there, or when they say frankly, "Now this medicine will hurt but its going to kill any germs in your cut—and you are a brave boy!" Officers in modern wars encourage men to face fear and say out loud to themselves and others, "Yes, I am scared to death!" They know they can then move on to courage in the face of danger. Pastors know how often individuals and whole families rise in thrilling fashion to an emergency when secret fears that they have been trying to escape by all kinds of fantastic tricks of suppression and repression are at last brought squarely out into the open. It is told of a mother coming out from a second painful operation on the eyes under local anaesthetic only, that when she asked and was told frankly that she would never see again she called her two sons to her and said, "Now I'll show you how to take trouble. How you take it is the only thing about it that is important."

Plan of Action

But fortunately the intelligence of men has made it possible to go on beyond this in managing our fears. For beyond facing squarely the fear itself, it begins to ask what causes it. A whole new profession, the psychologists and psychiatrists, has arisen in recent years to help men to probe back into their past to find and expose the roots of fears and anxieties that now hold them back. They join with doctors and educators and pastors and social workers in a mass assault on fear such as no generation before has seen. They find that ugly incidents of the past are often crowded down out of sight in our conscious minds, down into levels that they call the subconscious, only to bob up again in very different places. Our imaginations play strange tricks upon us, but now increasingly their bluff is "being called" and corrected.

Intelligence outlines a plan of action for the future that can often destroy or cure the fear. It helps us take our minds off ourselves, keeps us from nursing our fears, even getting sometimes a perverted pleasure out of them. Time prevents our elaborating from the files of routine experience the host of ways that ordinary men at work day by day, discover for coping with fear—new ways filled with hope for the future they had never dreamed possible. Just one illustration: a number of you mothers are grateful to some pioneer physiotherapists among us who are bringing back "childbirth without fear" through skilled exercise.

Yes, the wisdom and skills of men are increasingly helping us to face fears, study them, and then do something about many of them. And yet intelligence is not enough. For the more we know about some fears and their causes the more we realize how much more they are to be feared. So we press on.

Our second instrument in managing our fears and anxieties is unselfish love. One of the great discoveries of the human race was that "perfect love casteth out fear." Here we begin to move into the area where the religion of Jesus provided some very real resources beyond intelligence, though never in conflict with it.

What we have said so far described largely a self-centered program: I see myself and my fears. I study their causes—though with the counsel of others, of course. I set about a strenuous regime of self-discipline to cure and conquer my fears, in much the same way that a man will set to work to get well from some physical disease, or to get an education for himself or establish himself in business.

Experience of Friendship

But now we are changing our whole point of view. We are taking our eyes off ourselves and our fears and our very natural worries. We are recognizing another kind of human experience that is just as real as our fears. It is the outgoing experience of friendship for someone else. Even in the animal world there are beautiful illustrations of how the most timid beast completely forgets its fears when its young are in danger; danger, pain, even death are overruled by higher powers.

One of the most magnificent documents of our time is the brief diary found on the frozen body of Capt. R. F. Scott, written after he and four of his comrades had started back from their long 1,600-mile trek to the south pole. They reached the Pole on January 18, 1912, only to find that Amundsen had beaten them there. An early entry on the return trip had this scrawl: "We have turned back now on the goal of our ambition and must face 800 miles of solid dragging and good-by to most of the daydreams." Two months later, they were trapped by a series of blizzards in their tent—numb with cold, food almost gone.

> Tragedy all along the line. At lunch, day before yesterday poor Titus Oates said he couldn't go on. He proposed that we should leave him in his sleeping bag. That, we would not do, and induced him to come on, on the afternoon march. In spite of its awful nature for him, he struggled on and we made a few miles. At night he was worse and we knew that the end had come. Should this be found I want these facts recorded. Oates' last thoughts were of his mother. He did not—would not—give up hope to the very end. He slept through the night before last, hoping not to wake; but he woke in the morning—yesterday. It was blowing a blizzard. He said, "I am going outside and may be some time." He went out into the blizzard and we have not seen him since. . . .

Conjure up in your mind all the fears that this young Englishman's devotion to his comrades overruled.

Sometimes that unselfish love is for a cause

beyond one's self and a man forgets himself and his fears into immortality. One of my comrades at seminary was a gifted young man whom some of you may have known when he was a minister at our Congregational church at Claremont and a speaker at Asilomar. He had been a Rhodes scholar. During the war he was asked to fly to Sweden by the World Council of Churches on a special mission of friendship and encouragement to the Swedes during their black days. His plane was shot down just before it landed by the Germans. His father, Dr. Edward Hume of China, later said to a friend: "We now know Theodore's last words before he left the ground in England for his fatal flight. A Swedish minister had just landed from the plane that was to take Ted back to Sweden. As he met our son he said, 'You had better not take this plane. The Germans are laying for it. It's dangerous.' Straightening, Ted replied, 'But I am on a mission!' " "Perfect love casteth out fear."

Yes, but it also exposes us to new concerns for other people. And so we are vulnerable to new fears for them. We have hostages to fortune. Ask any parent or grandparent or friend! So we must press on to the third and final instrument with which to deal with our fears and anxieties. Dale Carnegie says, "I spent several years writing a book on how to stop worrying and start living. After years of research, I am convinced that the best possible method for conquering worry is prayer and religious faith."

The third way is a confident faith in the ever present God who cares with infinite compassion and who companions our ways even in the valley of the shadow of death. The ancient singer to the souls of men made this supreme discovery: "I will fear no evil, for thou are with me!" "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" "The Eternal God is my refuge, and underneath me are the Everlasting Arms."

Can you remember the warm glow of security and relief as a child when you wakened in the night after a nightmare of fear to find your father's large warm hand in yours? Here was something simpler than all the complications of intelligence or fear-expelling powers when we love someone or something else. Here is to find that there is at the heart of this world a love that seeks us through pain and fear and sin and rebellion, that comes to us! It is a divine initiative, an everlasting solicitude that simply and warmly identifies itself in all its love and power with us. In its presence fears simply evaporate.

Notice carefully just what this essentially Christian message means. It does not mean that evil and pain and fear are destroyed from the earth, or that there is some special kind of exemption for those who are open enough of heart to receive this supreme gift. No, pain and evil and their attending fears are still there, but now they are shared consciously with the Great Physician, the Good Shepherd.

It is my deepest wish for each one of us that we shall be warmly, quietly, shiningly aware of this marvelous togetherness. God, who so loved us that he gave himself to us in the form of a little child, comes also in the handclasp of a friend at our hospital bed, a cheering word as we look for employment. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death"—as Dr. T. Z. Koo tells he did during the bombing of Chungking—"I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

Courage is armor
A blind man wears;
The calloused scar
Of outlived despairs:
Courage is Fear
That has said its prayers.

KARLE WILSON BAKER.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

WILLIAM I. NEWMAN, Bethany Congregational, Los Angeles, Calif. "Spiritual Mountain Climbers." Ps. 61:2—*Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

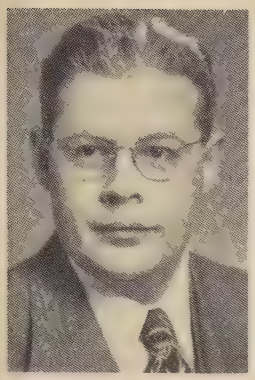
WILLIAM H. COLEMAN, Central Texas Conference, Fort Worth, Tex. "Supreme Message of the Incarnation." John 1:14—*And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*

DAVID A. WORKS, Christ Church, North Conway, N. H. "A Christian is One Who Makes a Decision." Matt. 25:31-33—*And when the Son of man shall come in his glory . . . he shall separate them one from another, as a sheperd divideth his sheep from his goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left.*

ALBERT E. GLOCK, Christ Lutheran, Normal, Ill. "Change for Church." Ps. 102:26-27—*They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*

L. W. HAUTER, First Presbyterian, Oelwein, Iowa. "Is God at Kaesong?" Ps. 139:9-10—*If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

SHERRILL B. BIGGERS, Kilgo Methodist, Charlotte, N. C. "The Pharisee Who Wouldn't Accept Christ" (Paul). Acts 9:5—*It is hard for thee to kick against the goads.*



By David Wesley Soper

Suffering Can Be a Liberal Education

NOT long ago I passed through a season of intense suffering. I am not at liberty to tell you the whole story. Suffice it to say that my assignment in suffering was of the type called frustration. At one time or another this laboratory project has been or will be included in your curriculum. I was subjected to a stiff course in the subject—not an elective course either; it was on the required list. My first home work was a chapter called "Total Despair." I thought a ton or so of hardware had fallen upon me from a great height. I understand how a man feels, if he is able to feel at all, who at one minute was speeding along at eighty miles an hour and at the next has run head-on into a ninety-ton tank.

I wanted a particular thing very, very much. Even more, events had convinced me the thing would be forthcoming. Still more, I was certain God himself had approved the enterprise. I reached out to grasp the prize, and in effect my arm was suddenly cut off at the shoulder. I started through an open door, and the door slammed my nose against the base of my brain. Sooner or later everyone experiences a technical or an actual knock-out. William Ernest Henley didn't know what he was talking about. Our heads either have been or will be both bloody and bowed.

The Soul's Cycle

The fact of suffering is universal. Every soul is put to the test; no one escapes. The effect differs, depending upon the sufferer. If he considers that the ultimate purpose of suffering is evil, bitterness will consume him; if he concludes that the purpose of suffering is wholly good, he will come to peace and poise.

When I was stopped cold, my first inclination was to bite somebody's head off. Surely my enemies had ganged up on me. One at a time I could have handled them, but they had formed a conspiracy. Who in the world had put the bee on me? I started a list of the possible blackguards who might have knifed me in the back. Before long I concluded that two cutthroats in particular had undoubtedly led the attack. A little more imagination and I had dreamed up a half-dozen additional hoodlums as probable finger-men. That eased my pain a bit. I stormed like the wrath of God against these sons of Satan and composed nasty letters in my mind. I considered several strategies of revenge.

The next day my thinking developed a theological bent. I began to get sore at God. I felt that he had taken altogether too much pleasure in pushing me around. It even appeared that he had opened the door of opportunity so he could slam it in my face. I was in a murderous mood, ready to assassinate deity *and* humanity.

On the third day I was prepared to allow God and man to continue to exist, with some important reservations. I even began looking inward for the trouble. It dawned upon me that my own sins, imaginary or real, might have given my enemies all the excuse they needed to do me in. The idea grew that my uncircumcized behavior might have frustrated and thwarted even God's good plan for me. Perhaps he had tried to put through a deal for the good of all, only to have some unseemly conduct of mine bob up to bring progress to a halt. Probably no one had thrown a monkey wrench into the machinery but myself. This was probably a better solution to the problem, and in part undoubtedly true, but it didn't entirely square with my view of reality.

Renouncing the Ego

At long last I found the needle in the haystack or at least one of many needles in one of many haystacks. Since I believe in the utter goodness of God on the one hand—that he is moved by no other motive than love—and since I believe in his absolute power on the other hand—that only his respect for our moral freedom limits his direct government of our lives—I concluded that the whole thing happened for good and sufficient reasons. One reason, as far as I am concerned, stuck out like a sore thumb—my pride, my determination to have my own way, my ego, my willful desire to escape discipline, my ambition to overrule the universe. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" I was simply not willing to be chas-

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DAVID WESLEY SOPER has been the chairman of the department of religion of Beloit College, Wis., since 1946. An ordained Methodist clergyman, he received his Ph.D. from Drew University and has traveled abroad. A frequent contributor to religious journals, he is also the author of These Found the Way*—the story of 13 converts to Protestant Christianity, published by Westminster, and is in frequent demand as a public speaker.*

tened. Self-love had become a malignant tumor; only deep surgery could remove it. The good Lord knew what he was doing; he had no cowardly fear of blood and pain; he set about the task of removing my tumor before it removed me. Much to my surprise, he brought me through major surgery without loss. The only thing I lost was my tumor. The operation was painful and exhausting; I hope it may not have to be repeated.

A friend in similar distress heard a voice which said: "You must get rid of your *self;* you must renounce your *self;* you must reject your *self.*" My suffering presented me with precisely the same message.

A Midterm Exam

Suffering is not always disciplinary. Some suffering is undoubtedly designed by the love of God merely to measure the soul's progress. This kind of suffering resembles a midterm exam to acquaint the student with his A, B, C, D, or F standing. The grade is informative but not final. It is entirely understandable that as God creates, he puts what he has created to the toughest kind of tests. When his creation breaks down under pressure, both creature and Creator know that further work is needed. In other words, the devil is god's agent, appointed within bounds to destroy everything that *can* be destroyed.

It is God's will that every soul enter heaven, and that heaven enter every soul, but it is also his will that every soul that can be enticed away from heaven be so enticed. The devil's job in the cosmic economy is simply to destroy what can be destroyed. Hence the steady and at times severe pressure of temptation! It makes exactly evident how far we have progressed in the things of the spirit. It makes exactly clear what creative work is still to be done within us. The world is a huge factory; life is an assembly line; each period of suffering is a test run, a shakedown flight, to measure exactly what has been produced—its strength or weakness, its perfection or imperfection.

Let me tell you about a friend of mine who was subjected, as Job was, to a long period of utter torment; he passed through nine years of intense physical and mental pain. No one knew what was the matter with him. High-priced doctors looked him over from end to end, charged their high prices, and left him poorer but no better. He was like the women whom Luke, the physician, described. He said she had suffered many things of many physicians, and was in no way bettered but rather grew worse. Doctors claim they know more today than they did nineteen centuries ago, but Luke's words would certainly fit many a modern sufferer.

God's Pace

My friend, who lived in Boston, hired Harvard's finest physicians. They examined him, scratched their heads, looked severely professional, muttered into their beards, pronounced many-syllable words in an unknown tongue, declared that he was not sick, and left with their fees paid and their patient in pain. For nine years he lived in agony. Physical illness increased financial perplexity. He kept his job by a miracle, appeared daily at the line of duty, gritting his teeth and blinded with pain. A thousand people, like Job's wife, would have urged him to curse God and die. No doubt both ideas occurred to him. Instead, he started praying. Night after night, unable to sleep, he lifted his heart to God. After long sorrow, still like Job, he was granted a semblance of health. Today he does the work of two men. The amazing thing is what he says about his siege of suffering. Not long ago he wrote:

> Never can I stop thanking God for the purgatorial fire of those years. In them God's severity became personally accepted as goodness. . . . Gradually God has converted me to patience. He knows what he is doing; he knows long waiting. What right have we to fret, or to try to take the Kingdom by force, even the force of insight? Truth wins slowly, but is never stopped finally. Patience has given me much peace. I was really surprised that with less push came far more acceptance. God's pace, after all, is best for us.

The thing you have to realize is this: it makes no difference whether you have a million dollars or a million debts, you will not escape a measure of suffering—mental, physical, or both. Whether the suffering makes or breaks you depends in the main upon you—and don't forget that you *can* ask God for help in the hour of need, and get it! It is not written anywhere in the universe that you *must* fail. It is God's will that you succeed, and there is strength available, if you ask for it.

The Crown of Life

It is entirely possible that some of the world's suffering, humanly speaking, has no explanation. It is both possible and probable that our attempted explanations have little to do with reality. Upon occasion we have to be boiled down to essentials. Often enough we have to be reduced to English, and this whether or not we understand why. Faith means we believe a good reason exists, whether or not we comprehend it. With or without understanding, we still have to suffer. A Ph.D. may mean only that the suffering is piled higher and drier. Jesus never explained pain; he overcame it. At one point on the cross his own suffering was beyond explanation: "Why, why hast thou forsaken me?" Jesus did not explain the cross; he bore it. He did not explain suffering; he endured it, and remained obedient and confident in spite of it.

The saints and the martyrs never fully understood why they suffered. Their suffering must at times have seemed wholly unreasonable. Of one thing only were they convinced—behind all suffering is the creative purpose of God; through all tribulation is his creative activity.

Hear the word of James: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Every man passes through the Garden of Gethsemane. One man in Gethsemane prayed: "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

THE IMPATIENT GRAPEVINE

A Sermon for Children by Robert Newell Zearfoss

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.—Isaiah 40:31.

IT was a warm day in the middle of summer and the Grapevine in the garden was feeling rather grumpy. He spoke aloud and said: "I can't understand why I don't begin to do beautiful things like my friends, the trees and the flowers and the vegetables. Here the tulips have all come up and bloomed and gone. I have no beautifully colored blossoms like the tulips, or any of the other flowers for that matter. All I had a few weeks ago was some tiny green pinpoint blossoms. They were so small that none of my friends even noticed I was blooming! Why don't I bear fruit like all my neighbors?"

The Cherry Tree spoke to the Grapevine and said: "Oh cheer up, it's early yet. Maybe it is not time for you to bear fruit."

The Grapevine answered: "Sure, Cherry Tree, you can talk like that. I remember the wonderful day in the spring when you were filled with beautiful white blossoms. They looked like snow and smelled so lovely in the cool spring evening. Already the pickers have come with their ladders and have picked the beautiful red cherries that grew from those blossoms. How your arms were laden down with that delicious fruit! But look at me, here I am. I just grow here as a vine and whatever fruit I do have looks like a string of green marbles. Nobody wants what I have. Everybody else is giving fruit to help people keep alive and strong and healthy. What is wrong with me? This is the first year that I have been old enough to have blossoms and to give fruit, and nothing happens!"

Well, the days went by and soon the end of August was at hand. Still the grapes on the Grapevine were hard and not ready to be picked. The Grapevine again spoke up: "I don't understand. Here all the days of the spring and the warm days of summer have come and gone. Pretty soon, my friend the Robin reminds me, it will begin to grow chilly and winter will be here. Why doesn't my fruit become ripe? I'd like to be helpful like the Apple Tree or the Peach Tree or even my little friends the Raspberry Bushes."

The Peach Tree spoke up and said: "I'm older than you are, Grapevine, and I remember your mother and your father. They never gave fruit early in the year. You are supposed to wait so that your fruit will be ripe when the touch of frost comes in the air. True, my blossoms did grow into large fruit after the bees buzzed around my branches. But now my fruit is picked for this year. Look at those Raspberry Bushes you were talking about!"

The Raspberry Bushes said: "Yes, look at us! When our fruit was ripe, the girls and boys came every day to pluck it from our fingers. You must remember, though, they did not pick it all the same day. They came back day after day. Suppose all the berries had been ripe on the same day. Goodness, there would have been so many they would not have known what to do. And what if all the other fruits ripened the same week? So you see, it is good that you are able to wait."

So the days went by and as September came the Grapevine made a discovery. The grapes at the tips of his fingers were beginning to turn purple, and sweetness came into them. Then the time came when the grapes were ripe and they had the flavor of the clear crisp days of autumn.

About this time the Farmer came walking through the cornfield, picking the last ears of ripe corn. His little boy was with him, running down the furrow and stopping to pick a cluster of grapes. When he had tasted them he turned to his father and said, "My, these grapes are good!" Then the Grapevine heard the Farmer say, "For the earth shall bring forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear."

The Grapevine said to himself: "Now I am glad that I am not a peach or an apple or even an ear of corn. My fruit helps to show all the beautiful days of the year. Now I will rest so that next year I may bring forth fruit again. I'm glad that all the fruit in the garden does not ripen at the same time."

ROBERT NEWELL ZEARFOSS is the pastor of the Deleware Avenue Baptist Church, Buffalo. His sermon "How Thick Is Your Skin?" appeared in our February issue.

Arise, O Church of God

St. Peter. C.M.

ARISE, O Church of God, arise,
And face the urgent hour;
Dare strenuous life in holy strife
With vision, courage, power.

Oppose the wrong with righteousness,
With eagerness and good;
And build through grace for every race
Eternal brotherhood.

Arise, O Church of God, arise,
And serve the human need;
Make truth your light and love your might,
And prove them by your deed.

Go forth and preach the saving word
Where toiling masses plod;
For He has willed, go forth and build
The Kingdom of our God.

CHAUNCEY R. PIETY.

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Pulpit Post

Can a Preacher Be Saved?

SIR: Just read the March Pulpit. The first article ("Can a Preacher Be Saved?) is mighy frank and wholesome. I am tempted to take a lecture period to read it to my senior class. If not, I will certainly ask them to read it and report.

Hamma Divinity School, AMOS JOHN TRAVER.
Wittenberg College,
Springfield, Ohio.

SIR: Two articles in your March issue were the best I have read since receiving The Pulpit—"Can a Preacher be Saved?" and "Four Roads to a Vital Faith." Just for your information I get little out of the monthly departments.

Enon Valley, Pa. WILLARD GEORGE.

SIR: I feel so-o-o small and guilty after reading Karl H. A. Rest's article about the ministerial unsaved, of whom I am undoubtedly one, for he doesn't leave much room for escape!

His strictures against Norman Peale's preaching are not entirely in order, I feel. I read the "Pealings" from Marble Collegiate Church regularly. They are always scripturally based, although the text is not appealed to in every paragraph. And there is a lot in the New Yorker's sermons about sin, guilt, and how to be saved, even if it does not appear in the familiar sermonic packages.

Athol, Mass. CLARENCE F. AVEY.

SIR: I personally feel that the present balance of material in The Pulpit is the best ever. I have particularly appreciated the lead articles lately, and the one in March, "Can a Preacher Be Saved?" was most thought provoking.

If the abundant sermons in The Pulpit do not stimulate enough thought to enable a minister to use life and the Scriptures as an overflowing source of "preaching material," then I do not feel that one more sermon would help either! Especially if your very helpful articles and features had to be sacrificed. I think that most of us read The Pulpit to stimulate our own thinking, rather than as a source of ready-made sermons and "preaching material." Keep up the good work.

Arlington, Tex. T. J. YOUNGBLOOD, JR.

We'll Take Either

SIR: I submit a *quatrain* for The Pulpit. Incidentally, what was called a "quatrain" in the March issue, page 25, was actually a *limerick,* named from the Irish county in which this type of poem originated or was brought to highest (? ! & - %) perfection.

FOOTNOTE TO ISAAC WATTS

It always seemed absurd to me
To sing of "such a worm as I,"
Until I saw an ugry worm
Become a gorgeous butterfly!

Elm Avenue Methodist, ERNEST K. EMURIAN.
Portsmouth, Va.

Thought for the Month?

SIR: I have just read your January "Thought for the Month." Your remark that "we admit another 100,000 Italians further to complicate our troubles with their fellow countrymen already here" is a shocking exposure of prejudice. Ordinarily one hears the like of this in a locker room, not from the pages of a liberal Christian magazine.

Congregation Beth Emeth, HERBERT E. DROOZ.
Wilmington, Del.

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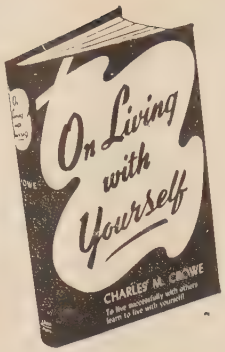

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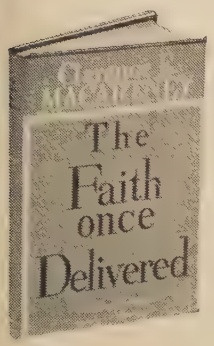

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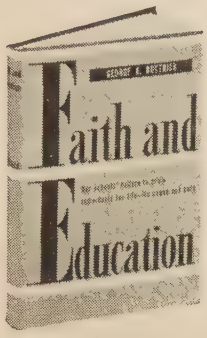

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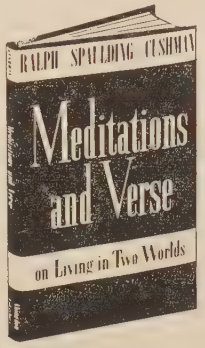

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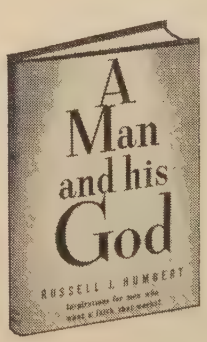

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Abingdon-Cokesbury Press

By Harry M. Savacool

The story of how one church conducts a healing ministry

'They Shall Lay Hands on the Sick'

THERE is an Episcopal church in Downtown Philadelphia where people come by the hundreds to bow at the altar rail for healing by the laying on of hands of the rector. This has been going on for ten years. Every Thursday healing services are held at 12:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Usually there are 200 or more in attendance and very seldom do less than 125 go forward for healing. The rector, Alfred W. Price, has received by word of mouth and in writing, testimonies to the healing of almost every human ill, including cancer, gangrene, arthritis and epilepsy.

On Thursdays at 12:30 and 5:30 Dr. Price enters the pulpit and without any hymn or other opening service plunges into a short but pointed sermon. Usually he discusses divine healing from some point of view. Always he drives home the fact that those who seek healing through the Christian faith must sincerely surrender their hearts to Christ. He stresses that those who hope to be healed not only must have faith but must be truly penitent and willing to obey God in all things. They must be willing to accept the will of God even if it means no healing for them.

'O Lord, Take . . .'

Then Dr. Price offers a prayer, usually in these words: "O Lord, take my mind and think through it. Take my heart and set it on fire with love. Take these hands and through them bring to these, thy suffering children, the fullness of they healing power. Amen."

Then turning to the people he invites any present who desire to seek healing to come and kneel at the altar rail. Immediately they pour forward. A pathetic-looking mother carries her little blond curly-headed baby forward. Another mother leads up her blind son of four or five years. Old people hobble to the rail, some with canes and some leaning upon friends. Some look well in body but bear the marks of tension and worry on their faces. It is a moving sight. The rail is soon filled with kneeling seekers. Others stand in the aisles waiting their turn. Dr. Price moves slowly along the row of bowed heads. He places his hands on each head and says a short prayer beseeching God—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—to "enter your soul, your mind, and your body for healing." Then the first group leaves the rail and another group presses forward to kneel for the laying on of hands.

When this part of the service is finished Dr. Price kneels at the altar and prays for the healing of a large number of people by name. These are the names of those for whom prayers have been requested. There follows a long prayer in which thanks is given for the healing of many by name. Then the benediction is pronounced and the people quietly leave the church.

Money Not Mentioned

In addition to these healing services the church has a prayer fellowship which arranges to have someone praying every day from 6:00 a.m. until midnight for the healing of the persons whose names have been sent to the rector. These names are kept on the altar.

Perhaps someone is tempted to say, "Just another money-making scheme. All these divine healers are getting rich off it."

The best answer to that is that the offering plates are not even passed at the healing services. Money is not mentioned. There are inconspicuous boxes in the back of the church where an offering can be made if one goes to the trouble to look for them. The only financial benefit that has come to St. Stephen's Church is that where a little group of discouraged people used to worship on Sunday mornings before Dr. Price came, the church is now filled with eager worshipers every Sunday.

But are people really healed at St. Stephen's? The church has not encouraged verbal testimonies in the services. It fears the abuses that prejudice many people against divine healing. However, the files of the church bulge with written testimonies and Dr. Price is always eager to tell of recent healings. He asserts that "hundreds of cures of organic, functional and mental disease have been attested by laboratory and x-ray tests from colds to cancer, from arthritis to chronic alcoholism, from earache to epilepsy, from mental depression to mental derangement."

Most thrilling to Dr. Price at the present time is the case of a Jewish convert to Christianity. This man was taken ill with cancer. A great Philadelphia hospital had given him up and was keeping him heavily drugged while waiting for the end. Dr. Price was called in and prayed for the healing of the patient with the laying on of hands. The prayer fellowship began their "chain of prayer" for him. In one week he left the hospital for a nursing home. After two weeks there he left to complete his recovery at the home of relatives.

Of course there are failures too, some of them tragic and pathetic. The death of a little four-year-old boy from cancer in spite of all the prayers offered was a severe blow. Dr. Price feels that, human as we are, we cannot know all the ways of the wisdom of God. We also must remember that to the Christian with his faith in heaven death is not an absolute evil. In the case of the little boy Dr. Price says that it is already apparent that his death is working in the hearts of the members of his family to bring a great dedication of life and talent to God's work.

No Magic Here

There is nothing of magic about the healing at St. Stephen's. It is based on spiritual and physical principles that are eternal and can be used anywhere at any time. Dr. Price sets forth five basic healing steps:

1. "Relax your body so that all tension goes out of you."
2. "Relax your mind. Fill your mind with God's flawless and undeviating perfection, and make claim to it as your own."
3. "Cleanse yourself of all fear, resentment and anxiety. God's healing power cannot work if you are not living according to his laws. Cleanse your heart of all that hinders the working of God's power—your resentments, antagonisms and sins."
4. "Visualize what you want. See yourself as God wants you to be, free from trouble, free from pain, free from sickness, free from resentment,

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HARRY M. SAVACOOL is interested in the development of a healing ministry through the church. He graduated from Drew Theological Seminary in 1923 and for the past 10 years has been the pastor of the Methodist church of Owego, N. Y.

free from divisiveness."

5. "Thank God that his healing power is now flowing through you. Before there is any tangible evidence of healing, say Jesus' own words, 'I thank thee, Father, that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always.' Know in your heart that God's healthful powers have been released in you and they will be."

Dr. Price believes that St. Stephen's Church is making a real contribution in the development of what he calls "sane Christian healing." A great many people are responding to his ministry and Christian healing is being carried on without sensationalism or commercialism. He hopes that many other churches will venture in faith into this so greatly needed ministry.

A Prayer

By C. Willard Fetter

Minister, First Evangelical United Brethren Church
Akron, Ohio.

ETERNAL GOD, in all ages past our help and for years to come our hope, above the clamor and noise of life, may we hear thy voice calling us to righteousness living, to peace of soul and to humble service. In this hour of worship, isolate us, we pray, from all distractions that may drown out thy persistent call to us. Keep us from mistaking the clamor of the crowd, the tinkle of money, the insistence of the military mind, the propaganda of the political parties or the prejudices of our own hearts for thy voice.

Teach us, O God, to be still, that the gentle whisper of thy voice may be heard. Teach us to expect thy voice not in earthquake, wind or fire, but in the still small voice of calm. Help us to hear thee in the voice of the dove, the rising cadence of the organ and the laughter of little children. In the appeal of the sick, the poor, the outcast, the homeless, the hungry, the refugee, let us hear thy call. In the great hymns and noble literature of the church—especially in the Bible—may thy word to us be clear. In the sermon of this hour, make plain to us thy desires for our lives.

May each of us today hear, in thy voice, the healing or challenging word that he needs. Speak peace to us if we are tension-torn, forgiveness if we are weighted with guilt, assurance if we are doubting thy goodness, words of healing if we are ill. Reawaken us if we have grown uneasy in well doing. Speak, too, the needed word to all who are absent from us today.

In this moment of prayer we dedicate ourselves, O God, to heed thy voice, answer thy call, and do thy will. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lead On, O King Eternal!

. . . the attorney general of New Jersey has ordered all games of chance banned, but there is doubt whether the order will be enforced against churches. (The Christian Century, June 27, '51).

Since gambling is a social sin
And our fair land besmirches,
We'll ban its practice everywhere,
. . . Except, of course, in churches
Their program needs our full
support
Sans fear of interruption,
To help men do the Father's will.
And stamp out all corruption.
—C. W. Vandenbergh.

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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

Ministerial Sharecroppers

"QUOTATIONS can be (and often are) a substitute for thinking." Such was the verdict of one of my colleagues as we discussed a paper which had been recently read at a club to which we both belonged. His remark was pungent, but it was warranted. The paper had been constructed from a mass of quotations, pasted together with third-rate platitudes, and equipped with an introduction and conclusion which gave a meretricious appearance of originality.

I have thought frequently of my colleague's word. Never do I find myself in that nightmare of the conscientious instructor, "term papers," but what it becomes very real. Despite the full and lengthy warning which each class receives at the beginning of the course against making the coming study in terms of quotations and near-quotations from second- and third-hand investigators, such continue to flood in. Again and again I have been on the verge of giving up that sort of assignment—valuable as it can be, when properly done—solely because of unwillingness to be a party to a practice which is not only the opposite of scholarship but is likely to become a homiletic bad habit too.

Plagiarism is an occupational disease of the preacher. Few are immune by nature. Many, to their everlasting credit, avoid contracting it by reason of an ultrastrict diet and incessant self-discipline. At some future time I hope to venture a column on the nature and aftereffects of this disease, even in this journal which provides such delectable enticements to the unwary—or should I say the "unvaccinated"?

But to revert to my friend's remark. I think of it very frequently as I listen to sermons—sermons, I hasten to insist, which are far from deserving the diagnosis at the end of the preceding paragraph. I am thinking particularly of the sort of literary adornment in the form of lengthy quotations, excerpts and digests from books and articles, which is so common in many sermons. Be it clearly understood that I am not here considering pulpit illustrations, that is, stories good, bad or indifferent which are seemingly a *sine qua non* for many preachers, and for which, even in this staid journal, there is a constant demand in the agony column from readers, especially if they—the illustrations, not the readers—are "hot from life's griddle." I have devoted a few feeling words in these pages to that subject; at the moment I am not disposed to further observations along that line.

Instead I am limiting myself severely to the quoted pearls of price. At times they undoubtedly have their use. In every respectable theological seminary there are courses on the minister's use of literature. And there should be; I am in no sense deriding them. What I am concerned with is the way quotes and near-quotes are to be purveyed, homiletically speaking. Frankly, I am definitely homeopathic in this respect. Occasionally—and the word is rigorously chosen—they are very effective, clinching a point, buttressing an argument, illumining what might be obscure. What I am deploring is not their judicious use, when they have become a real part of the resultant whole, not conspicuous in themselves, not introduced—better said, not dragged in—as *objêts d'art*, but because without them the whole would be less complete. So used, they are not a substitute for thinking, but instead are the product of it.

Too often they are nothing of the sort. They are trotted out much as so-called funny stories are by after-dinner speakers, not because they illustrate this point or that (or even the toastmaster's introduction), but simply because the speaker wants to tell them. When so used in a sermon, they warrant my colleague's diagnosis. I have heard the definition of a sermon given as "three blunt points and a pretty poem." I see little reason why every sermon, even if it come from a trinitarian pulpit, must have three points—often I would gladly settle for one—and no reason at all for the notion that a poem or other borrowed heart- or brain-throb is essential *per se*.

If it is used, let it be a real part of the fabric, not an ornament basted or clipped on. In heaven's name spare us from the trite (I had nearly said *tripe*): "Of course, you all remember what So-and-So says in ———" Of course the congregation doesn't, and the preacher knows it doesn't. In nine cases out of ten such an introduction

(Continued on page 23)

Sermon Summaries

Life's Alternatives

ONE of the most frequent questions the minister is asked is, "Why did this have to happen to me?" Every minute, every hour, every day, in a hundred different ways, in a thousand different places, tragedy strikes, and tear-stained faces are turned toward the church with the question on every pair of lips, "Why? Why?"

Behind the reasoning in most of these cases lies the age-old fallacy that God is the kind of God who always rewards righteousness with what we call beneficence and punishes sin with what we call adversity. It simply is not true. I know not of a single place in Scripture where a guarantee is made that if you become a Christian yours will be the road to perfect ease, contentment and bliss. Almost the opposite is predicted. Jesus said, "My cross is heavy and my yoke is not light . . . Those that follow me will be forsaken by all . . . Strait is the path and narrow is the way which leads to life everlasting." Christianity makes no promise whatever that the way of righteousness is void of thorns.

Life frequently presents us with forced alternatives. It is an either-or proposition. When tragedy strikes, either a person can become bitter, cynical, so overcome by despair, so selfish about being hurt, that he turns inward and broods; or he can pick up the pieces, knowing full well that they can never be put together in the same configuration, and with shaken spirit and wounded soul set out consciously to win something great from the adversity which so savagely has struck. Therein lies the creative way which alone leads to victorious Christian living.

I once saw an unusual picture in a child's gift shop which illustrates this most effectively. It showed a lad about seven years of age, cowlick sticking up on the back of his head, fishing pole with small fish on the end of the hook in one hand and minnow bucket in other, stubbed toe with bandage, pants legs rolled up, bare feet, walking on a plank across a chasm. By the boy's side, hand on shoulder, walks a winged celestial being. The caption on the bottom of the picture read, "His Guardian Angel."

I would like to think that the artist is dealing with an idea which probes to the very depths of our philosophy of life; and that is, what kind of God do we really believe in? In the first place, we can assume that God is not really good but is evil, and has placed what goodness there is in life as a taunt, for the purpose of intensifying

(Continued on page 25)

Enslin

(Continued from page 22)

really means: "I have just run across something which has caught my fancy and I am dying for a chance to use it; so here goes." No one is fooled into thinking that he is to receive a treasure long loved by his erudite pastor; instead he knows he is about to get a brief sample of the latter's recent reading—probably from a digest compiled to aid the pastor, whose own lovely thoughts are running low.

I had hoped to have room for another paragraph, but I must be content with a final plea: Please, I beg of you, dear preacher, do not introduce the about-to-be-quoted stuff with "I want to share with . . ." The stomach of the average churchgoer is, through long training, reasonably strong; but there are limits beyond which none can go without immediate nausea. This new fad—am I wrong in thinking it is new and spreading like ragweed?—bids fair to become a greater menace than "As the little child said" or "As the poet sings."

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Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

• *The Body of Christ*

THE most idiotic yet tragic fact in today's life is our religious fragmentation. We are split up into a hundred and one denominations and sects, each competing with the other, not for souls but for adherents. What we need to recover is the catholic church. When I say the "catholic church" I do not mean the Roman Catholic Church or the Greek Catholic Church or the Anglican Catholic Church; I mean the Church Universal, for the word "catholic" means universal—"the one body with many members." We need to recover the *body* of Christ, not just the spirit of Christ, for any spirit on earth must express itself through a body.

Often we talk about the spirit of Christ as if it were some kind of supernatural, protoplasmic, unattached force touching its mystical wand here and there. Believe me, the spirit of Christ in the world takes form as a body, just as Jesus was an individual body. Though he committed his spirit that it might be passed on to other bodies, we may have the spirit of peace but be unable to make it operative because we fail to "embody" it. When the United Nations was first formed we had that spirit, but we did not give it an adequate body. The result: cold war. As Paul said: "In one spirit we are all baptized, but likewise we must be in one body whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free. One body may have many members. Now ye are the body of Christ and severally members thereof."—*Ensworth Reisner, First Methodist, Milwaukee, Wis.*

• *'This Is My Father's World'*

IF the young folks of our various churches were asked to vote on their favorite summer hymn, probably the hymn that would lead the rest would be "This Is My Father's World." That hymn expresses the thought of Clement of Alexandria: "Thou, O Lord, hast made man a beautiful, breathing instrument of music whereupon the spirit maketh melody unto the Lord." As we look out across our world in this glad growing season, it does seem to us as if this world came directly from the hand of God. But when we pick up our newspapers and read of what is going on in some places in the world, or when we look around in our own communities and see the sin, ugliness and dirt that are always to be found, we pause and wonder if this is in reality our Father's world. We understand the mood that Bernard Shaw was in when, after the First World War, seeing the nations girding for the Second, he remarked: "From the actions of humankind it seems to me as if this particular planet of ours must be the insane asylum for some other world."

Certainly we cannot lessen the evil and sin in the world by simply talking about the beauty and loveliness that are also there. But when we say that this is our Father's world we are not denying the evil of life. We are simply trying to interpret life from the highest we know. Sensing the good and the loveliness in life, we believe that it is real and that evil is the blocking of the will of God. So most of us, looking out upon our world, are willing to sing the old hymn of love and beauty, "This Is My Father's World."—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

Pulpit Calendar

May 4—Third Sunday after Easter.
May 4-11—National Family Week.
May 11—Fourth Sunday after Easter. Festival of the Christian Home (Mother's Day).
May 18—Fifth Sunday after Easter. Rural Life Sunday.
May 22—Ascension Day.
May 25—Sunday after Ascension.
May 30—Memorial Day.
June 1—Whitsunday (Pentecost). Christian Unity Sunday.
June 8—Trinity Sunday. Sovereign's Birthday (United Kingdom, Canada, Australia).
June 14—Flag Day (USA).
June 15—Second Sunday after Pentecost. Children's Sunday.
June 22—Third Sunday after Pentecost.
June 29—Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles. Nature Sunday. Independence Sunday.
July 1—Dominion Day (Canada).
July 2—The Visitation.
July 4—Independence Day (U.S.A).
July 6—Fifth Sunday after Pentecost.
July 13—Sixth Sunday after Pentecost.
July 20—Seventh Sunday after Pentecost.
July 27—Eighth Sunday after Pentecost.

SEASONS: Eastertide and Whitsuntide.
ALTAR COLORS: Eastertide, white; Whitsuntide, red and white; Pentecost, red; June 8 and 15, white; 22, green; 29, green or red; July, green.

(*Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of nationwide or denominational significance.*)

• *This Prodigal World*

GOD is not lost; we have lost God. We have gone into a far country. Truly this is a prodigal world. Our nation is placing great emphasis on munitions, a large army and navy. We are told these are for peace. But history reveals that little or nothing is accomplished through these instruments, certainly not peace. War is nothing more than a "hypo" to the conquered nation. It is placed on the table and given an anaesthetic.

But the Great Physician is not called to the operating table. The cancerous disease of the patient nation is not removed and grafted with a new concept of life. The church needs to go to the bedside of the patient and administer a spiritual diet. The military anaesthesia is not conducive to the patient's betterment. This prodigal world needs Christ. As long as mankind takes its sustenance from the trough of the world, there is no hope. We furnish money and munitions to the nations. We need to supply them with Bibles and brotherhood.—*A. R. Addy, Epiphany Lutheran, Elmhurst, Ill.*

• *Charting Our Course*

IN 1611 the crew of Henry Hudson's little ship, the Discovery, after a winter's imprisonment in the ice of Hudson bay, mutinied. They placed the explorer, his 12-year-old son who had accompanied him on the voyage, the ship's captain, John King, together with several loyal sailors, in an open boat. The mutineers then sailed the ship back to England. We do not know what happened to that gallant remnant of the crew which was left behind, but Henry Van Dyke using his poetic imagination has visualized that tragic incident in his poem, "Hudson's Last Voyage."

Even in his bitter plight, Henry Hudson reaffirms his belief in the existence of a northwest passage, and with quiet valor gives an order that might very well be ours as we chart our course through a confused and uncertain day:

So point her up, John King, nor'west by north.
We'll keep the honor of a certain aim,
Amid the perils of uncertain ways,
And sail ahead, and leave the rest to God.

—*Ralph T. Haas, Crescent Avenue Presbyterian, Plainfield, N. J.*

• *Living More Abundantly*

IN Daphne du Maurier's new novel, *The Parasite*, one of the characters, the daughter of very talented parents, remarks: "We're living little lives today, doing little things, thinking little thoughts, while all of the time we know we can do more than we are doing. We are living on the brilliancy of the past. In other words, we are parasites, just parasites on yesterday. Life must be more than that."

If we are to live fully, there is the need for a new spirit and a new power to be born again within our life.—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

Sermon Summaries

(Continued from page 23)

our disappointment and grief at the end of life's journey, when we find that it has been just a farce.

If that is the case, then the heavenly being by the little boy's side, instead of leading him to safety, will merely take him to a slippery spot on the plank and allow him to slide into eternal nothingness. Instead of being a benevolent deity, God would be a malevolent devil.

The only alternative we have in working out a philosophy of life is in believing that the power at the heart of this universe is ultimately good, and that song of the birds, the smell of springtime blossoms, the beauty of an autumn sunset, the love in a mother's eyes, are the true clues as to the elemental nature of things, and that the heavenly being by the little fellow's side will surely take him across safely to eternal happiness.

If that really is the case, when the yearning face and tear-stained eyes are turned to you with the question "Why?" you can truthfully answer that you believe that God's purposes are so vast and glorious, so beyond all our guessing now, that when they are achieved, all our sufferings and agonies of today, shall, seen from that land where God's age-long plans come true, amount to as much as a trifling episode in the events of an ordinary day amounts to now.

Only by following that alternative can we say, "All things work together for good to them that love him."—*Carlus O. Basinger, First Congregational, Port Washington, Wis.*

Cross-Bearers at Home

John 19:25-27.

THE third word of Jesus on the cross turns our attention to the importance of the home. No religion exalts womanhood and undergirds home life more than Christianity. Follow Jesus through his ministry and note his tender relations with women, his love for children, his apt illustrations from home life, and his terms of God as Father, men as brothers and heaven as our home. In a day when many homes tend to be lodging houses, boarding places and storage centers, it is well that the implications of the cross be centered in the home.

First, ponder the power of mother love at Calvary. Is it not significant that "there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother"? Strong men, who boasted that they would follow him even to death, took to their heels. But Mary stood by, and the other women also. Here again the so-called weaker sex proved the stronger. Of all the disciples only John is mentioned as having stood by him at the cross. But there were three, possibly four, women who stayed with him until the end.

The facts of life rebuke us for underestimating the capacity of women for rendering service in hard circumstances. Think of Anne Hutchinson, Florence Nightingale, Mary Slessor, the pioneer mothers of the West, "heroines of Korea, the nurses who fly with the wounded," and our mothers. Our debt to cross-bearing women will always be beyond our ability to pay.

The late Bill Stidger once said that he wished he could offer a million dollars for the best two synonyms for love. He said he thought the rewards would go for two words intimately associated together, Christ and mother.

We see also, in this text, the love of a devoted son for his mother. Charity began at home with Jesus. The Savior of the world did not overlook his mother's need for salvation. Some leaders are charmed by the crowds but are impatient with individuals. They are fascinated by the forest but are blind to the wonder of the tree. Jesus was not that way. He was not too busy to show love and kindness to his mother.

Indeed, if we cannot be worthy sons and daughters at home, it is questionable whether we can be worthy any-

(Continued on page 27)

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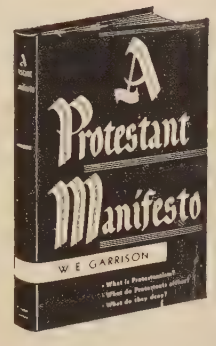

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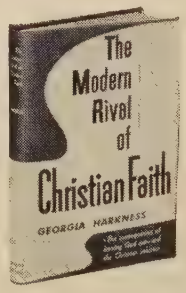

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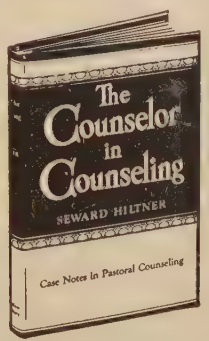

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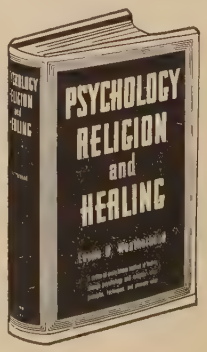

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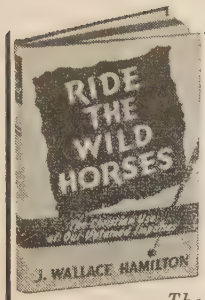

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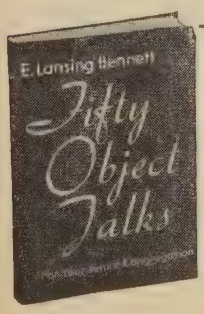

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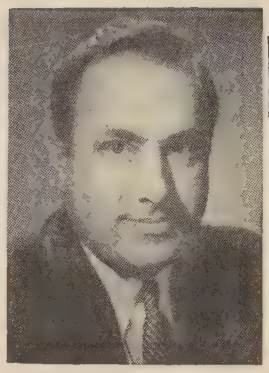

Ministry of Music

By Ernest K. Emurian

Church Music 50 Years Ago

THE problems which face church musicians, directors, publishers and choirs today are basically the same that our fathers and grandfathers faced and that our children and grandchildren will face.

The February 5, 1902, issue of the *Choir Journal,* published fifty years ago by the B. F. Wood Music Co., Boston, contains, among other things, three articles which deal with the questions this writer has been discussing in recent months.

For example, there is the perennial problem of what constitutes sacred music. Conservatives, liberals and in-betweens have been fighting this out for generations, creating much discord in the process. For congregational singing, some prefer psalms, others choose great hymns, still others select the more melodic and tuneful gospel songs, chorus and all. For the choir loft, there is the Palestrina-Bach-German chorale school, laboring under the impression that, as God stopped writing with the close of the New Testament canon, he stopped composing with the close of the Reformation era. On the other hand, there are those who mistakenly think that God ought to be able to understand and appreciate anything written to his glory, whether it is harmonious, inspiring, musical, or as confusingly unintelligible as a super-modernistic Cubist painting hung upside down!

To prove that we haven't moved very far since the turn of the century, read this quote from a Belfast, Ireland, newsletter, reprinted in the aforementioned *Choir Journal*:

> There are several points of similarity between the use of words and of music in divine worship that are worth noticing. Both prayer or sermon and music use material not of itself sacred in the shape of phrases, verbal or musical. But their use as expressing the soul's sincere desire . . . or as a means of exhortation to godliness . . . is of a sanctifying nature. So also music that is an incentive in any way. . . . Good music is sacred music and good music is that which breathes the pure idea of the inspired soul of the composer and touches a chord of sympathy in the . . . soul of the listener. . . . To say that music not originally intended for performance in a church is not sacred is to set up a peculiarly earthly standard of man-prescribed sacredness against that grand spirituality that is the essence of all true sacredness.

So from the inspired souls of Bach and Handel, and from the equally inspired souls of George Stebbins and William Bradbury, come strains of music that touch other souls and inspire them to better Christian living. Let the highbrow ridicule or the lowbrow scorn, God speaks through both types of musicians to meet the diverse spiritual needs of all his children.

George B. Nevin (1859-1933; composer of the cantata *The Adoration*) in a "letter to the editor" in this same journal of 1902, raises a question which has been plaguing church musicians for generations: "How may we make the music in our churches impressive?" After deploring the current state of church music, the famous musician proceeds to suggest that organists and choir directors need to be more interested in the welfare of the church in general; this, he suggests, is so obvious that further comment is unnecessary. To which, after the passing of time, some will add a hearty "Amen!" But, Nevin continues, the minister needs to be better acquainted with the musical ministry of the church. He bewails the fact that ministerial students are not given serious training in this field in the seminaries and theological schools. He writes: "I am not to be understood as suggesting that the minister should be the drillmaster, but that he should receive such instruction in this art as would enable him to discern the false from the true."

In another letter in this same issue "A Constant Reader" writes: "Too many clergymen are in absolute ignorance as regards music, and it is a most deplorable matter that, considering the legitimate and prominent part which music plays in religion, and its practical value to the minister, such ignorance should exist. Some seminaries, to be true, give the subject consideration, but it is only superficial. Welcome anything under heaven's blue vault which will disseminate musical learning among the clergy!"

The final article in that issue of 50 years ago deals with choral and clerical vestments, commenting on their use in some churches and their rejection in others.

So it goes. Each generation thinks that it is the first to face such issues, and considers its job half-done if all the difficulties are not satisfactorily resolved.

Sermon Summaries

(Continued from page 25)

where else. How inconsistent to be courteous to business associates and not respect the women of our own household! Creed and deeds must be united in wedlock at home, or else our faith is vain. How can we love the Lord, whom we have not seen, if we do not love those of our households, with whom we have daily dealings? And Christian love means appreciation, kindness, mutual helpfulness and sacrifice.

Another lesson in this tender scene at the foot of the cross is the love of a disciple for an adopted mother. John seemed eager to comply with the Lord's request that he open his home to Mary and provide for her old age. The implications of John's hospitality are far-reaching. The challenge isn't to care of kinfolk only, though many fall short even in this, but to open our homes and communities to needy, homeless people. Mary was a displaced person. In our world there are multitudes of displaced persons, "delayed Pilgrims," who are knocking at American doors for a new start. What if we harden our hearts and turn the other way? Think also of handicapped persons, orphans and unwanted infants, many of whom can contribute to our family circles and need Christian love and care.

Cross-bearing is one of the marks of a Christian. The example and love of our Lord motivate us to bear each other's burdens. An acid test of our faith is in how we live at home. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Only as we make the foundations of home life strong and durable is there promise of nations living together as a peaceful family.—*Bernard N. King, First Church of the Brethren, York, Pa.*

On Being a Partner with God

MANY people who have succeeded in life because they were part of a partnership, in all probability would never have succeeded alone. You may think of Gilbert and Sullivan, Vernon and Irene Castle, Plato and Socrates. It is true that some people seem to do their best independently, but there is one partnership that, our faith informs us, no person can live satisfactorily without; that is spiritual partnership. St. Paul sums up the idea of this in his Epistle to the Philippians: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." You work, and God works; it is a partnership. But what are the marks of a successful partnership?

One certainly is the pooling of resources. In business one partner will put up so much and his partner will match it, perhaps not in the same commodity, but in something that assures equality. So it is in our relationship with God. We provide the flesh and blood; God provides the inner spirit that makes it possible for our flesh and blood to live triumphantly.

Another mark of successful partnership is complete honesty. Each partner must be open and aboveboard. This applies to the partnership of the home. It applies to our partnership with God. Above all else God wants his children to be truthful. Both the Old and the New Testament make this point unmistakably plain.

The third mark of successful partnership is confidence in the results of the relationship. Christians are to have confidence that if they cast their bread upon the water, it will return to them. *Presbyterian Life* magazine some months ago told the story of a man who would accept only what people of their initiative gave him. He and his wife had obligations with a growing family, but still no salary, no income except what others deemed his work to be worth. And yet this couple was still solvent and serene in their confidence that God could and would provide.

Professionalism

We bury the dead so glibly—
It's part of our job, you know!
We preach, and baptize, and marry,
Aye, merrily life doth go!

But oh, there's pain and heartache,
There's joy, and hope, and fear;
There's a heart, a soul, a *human*
Has need of the cheer and the tear.

God grant that, like Jesus, while treading
Life's rugged vale and steep,
With mankind, toiling, bleeding,
We can hope, and laugh, and weep!

—*Victor E. Beck, Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran, New York, N. Y.*

Three characteristics therefore make a successful partnership: the pooling of resources, complete honesty, unshakable confidence.—*E. K. Roberts, Merriam Park Presbyterian, St. Paul.*

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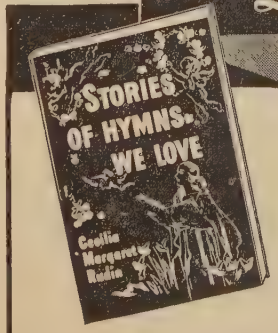

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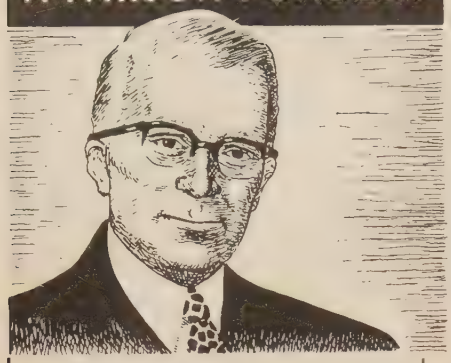

Human nature provides a fascinating field of study, and the question of why people behave as they do never ceases to be interesting. Like a famous actress, the genus homo is always unpredictable.

For example, the average man will not mind spending money if he secures real value in exchange. But he resents being taken in—he feels aggrieved when he finds he could get the same thing for less. Yet clergymen of a certain type continue to buy policies for the most amazing reasons from companies which cannot compete with the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund's rates. Their reasons sound fascinatingly feminine. A charming personality lured them into actually paying thousands of dollars more for a policy than they needed to spend. It sounds quite like an item from "Believe it or Not."

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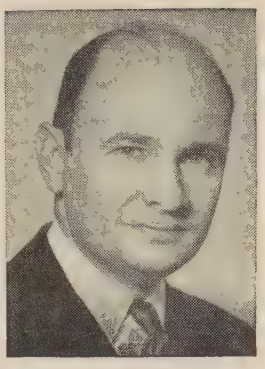

Come Let Us Worship

By Clarence Seidenspinner

Arrangement of the Chancel

IT is a curious fact that at the moment that Protestant churches are seeking to place the altar as far away from the people as possible, there is a tendency in Roman Catholic churches to bring the altar back to the people. Barry Byrnes has designed his Roman Catholic churches to make this possible. A typical plan is the projection of a rather wide chancel out into the body of the nave. This means that the people in the side aisles are placed on either side of the chancel platform. Since the altar is thus brought forward into the nave, there being no apse, it is easier for the congregation to have a sense of being participants in the mass. The Barry Byrnes churches are very successful architectural experiments in the attempt to return the altar to the people.

In her book *France Alive*, Clare Huchet Bishop tells us of the Catholic experiments which seek to make worship communal in France today. The clergy have no hesitancy in improvising an altar wherever they want to celebrate the mass. They will go into a shop, for example, and cover a work bench during the noon hour and use that as an altar on which to celebrate the sacrament. After the service is over they will take off the liturgical cover and place a tablecloth over the bench. Then the priest and workmen will sit around the bench and eat their lunch together.

The same communal spirit characterizes the placement and use of the altar in many of the parish churches in France today. More and more the particular altar on which mass is to be celebrated is brought right down to the front of the chancel. The celebrant, instead of standing directly in front of the table, will now stand behind it and thus face the congregation as the host. With the altar in this closer proximity to the people, he will read and celebrate the service. In some cases this altar is even moved out of the chancel and into the main aisle of the nave so that the people, in quite a literal way, surround it. This is an architectural means of instrumenting the whole contemporary Catholic attempt to make worship intelligible to the people and to bring them a sense of communal participation.

Yet we Protestants are now inclined to feel that the only possible arrangement for a chancel is to place the altar at the end of the apse, run choir stalls at right angles to it, to the right of which is placed the pulpit and to the left the lectern.

Let us recognize the fact, however, that this is *one* possible arrangement of the chancel, not the only one. To be sure, it is a good arrangement. It is aesthetically satisfying. It is theologically and liturgically sound in that the altar symbolizes the presence of Almighty God and ought to be the central point of congregational vision. A significant and beautiful worship is always possible in this kind of open chancel arrangement.

But suppose you have a less formal arrangement of the chancel, one which is sometimes, though mistakenly, called pulpit-centered. The choir is placed behind the chancel platform and faces the people. Directly in front of them are clergy stalls and in the center of the chancel platform is usually found a sermon desk or ambo. Directly beneath the ambo is often found the holy table. If you have this type of chancel, ought you to feel depressed and come to the conclusion that, since you are hampered architecturally, a significant and beautiful worship is impossible for your parish? Ought you to get the urge to raise a tidy sum of money to remodel the old-fashioned chancel? Many a church has done just this sort of thing even though the building has not been architecturally designed for an open chancel. You will sometimes find an amazing architectural tour de force that has destroyed the basic lines and spirit of a building in order to provide a parish with a newfangled open chancel.

Never Satisfied

Discontent
Wants to change about;
Out wants in
And in wants out.
MEREDITH B. BANTING.

When I was giving a series of lectures on worship last year, one bishop said to me, "Can you tell the men that every fellow, up and down and around, doesn't need to think that he must raise $20,000 to remodel his chancel?" The bishop was right; many a church has been ruined by that kind of project, architecturally, financially and ceremonially. Next month we will discuss the question: What can we do about it?

Preachers in Print

'Well Done, Faithful Servant'

There has recently grown up in the Methodist Church an organization known as the Circuit Riders composed of laymen who are concerned that their denomination has veered too far to the left. The publicity releases of the organization have majored in attacks on one of Methodism's great liberal bishops. This reviewer respectfully suggests that every member of the Circuit Riders owes it to himself to read ★★★BY THE WAY, the autobiography of Bishop Francis J. McConnell (Abingdon Cokesbury, $3.50). It goes without saying that all socially conscious Protestant ministers will want to read this important inside story by one of the greatest, albeit one of the most controversial, churchmen of our times.

In many respects BY THE WAY is as much an epic of an era as it is the life story of one man who lived in that era. It contains intimate pictures of both churchmen and secular leaders who weathered the storms of the developmental stages of interdenominational cooperation, the fast social changes that technological advance made possible and the "hell period" of the American industrial revolution. The book is full of source material for historians and biographers. It is too bad that space allowed only one paragraph (p. 228) in which the Bishop could give his interpretation of the late Ralph E. Diffendorfer. It is probable, however, that no more adequate and accurate picture of the great missionary leader has yet appeared. This illustrates the art of "tight" writing which Bishop McConnell mastered long ago. Once the Bishop submitted a sermon to the Pulpit which needed to be cut by two lines in order to fit the space available. This writer spent more than an hour trying to strike out enough words to delete two lines of print.

Preachers of denominations which do not have episcopal systems of government will particularly enjoy Chapter 17, "Bishops at Close Range." Here again, the reader's greatest regret is that space limitations have prohibited much fuller characterizations.

BY THE WAY is good reading from page 1 to the end. What is needed now is a full and objective biography of Bishop McConnell. When it is written it will take far more than the 269 pages the Bishop has modestly consumed in telling his life story.

GARLAND EVANS HOPKINS.

The Pulpit rejoices in the selection of our managing editor, Garland Evans Hopkins, to make a goodwill tour to the Middle East. Mr. Hopkins is being accompanied by Dorothy Thompson, widely known American columnist and lecturer. Miss Thompson and Mr. Hopkins are the president and vice-president respectively of the American Friends of the Middle East, Inc., an organization which seeks to strengthen the common spiritual and cultural bonds between the people of the United States and the people's of the Middle East. Our managing editor plans to return on May 21.

ROUNDUP

★UNDERSTANDING FEAR IN OURSELVES AND OTHERS. By **Bonaro W. Overstreet.** Harper, $3.00. A helpful and practical study of a common problem. Especially good in its analysis of fear in the expanding and contractive crises of life and in the presentation of the disguises fear assumes. Excellent illustrative material throughout.—*Theodore F. Adams, First Baptist, Richmond, Va.*

THE KINGDOM OF JESUS. By **John Dashiell Stoops.** Philosophical Library, $3.75. Not a book for casual or restful reading, or one particularly fruitful for a reader who lacks a good background in psychology or philosophy. Stoops' handling of New Testament interpretation minimizes the importance of the Gospels as history, and is highly controversial at points, but possibly for that reason makes good stuff on which to sharpen another's mind.—*Joseph S. Johnston, Epworth Methodist, Norfolk, Va.*

53 OBJECT SUNDAY TALKS TO CHILDREN. By **J. A. Schofield, Jr.** W. A. Wilde, $1.75. A bit too trite for a preacher to prepare or a child to endure. While some are cute and others clever, the spiritual conclusions are too forced to be natural or effective, and the over-all effect a bit of a letdown. The minister who insists on a children's sermon had better stick to Bible stories!—*Ernest K. Emurian, Elm Avenue Methodist, Portsmouth, Va.*

PASTORAL CARE. Edited by **J. Richard Spann.** Abingdon-Cokesbury, $2.50. A most helpful new book in the field of pastoral work—this time a symposium, with the down-to-earth quality supplied by the 19 authors, most of whom are pastors themselves. Part I gives an excellent background treatment of pastoral work; Part II gets down to cases, dealing not only with the usual categories of "The Sick," "The Bereaved," "The Mentally Ill," but with hitherto little discussed but much worked-with groups, such as "Middle-Aged Normal Church Members," "The Church's Senior Members," "Church Officials," "New Church Members." A book every alert pastor will want on his desk.—*George H. Orser, Fairmount Avenue Methodist, Richmond, Va.*

FROM EXPERIENCE TO FAITH. By **Edwin P. Booth.** Association Press, $1.75. This is theistic humanism at its most hopeful eloquence. Its theological position will give many a Christian no little cause for violent dissent. The role of revelation in religion in the mind of the writer recedes rapidly and is replaced in great measure by experience. The author's position seems to approximate 18th century Deism more closely than the more prevalent ideas of historic Christianity. A provocative book that challenges one's convictions, and one doesn't have to agree with it to be stimulated by it.—*Herman J. Kregel, Post Chaplain, U. S. Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.*

(★★★★You can't afford to be without it; ★★★Unusually valuable to the preacher; ★★Above average in its field; ★A good buy; No star, depends on your taste and need.)

Books Preachers Are Reading

An analysis based on reports from leading religious booksellers and from the reading of the Pulpit's distinguished editorial associates and book reviewers.

March	April	This Month	
1	1	1	**A Man Called Peter.** *Catherine Marshall. McGraw,* $3.50
6	3	2	**The Seven Words.** *Clovis G. Chappel, Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $1.00
2	2	3	**Questions People Ask.** *Robert J. McCracken. Harper,* $2.50
3	6	4	**The Interpreter's Bible.** *Vol. VII. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $8.75
4	4	5	**The Life We Prize.** *Elton Trueblood. Harper,* $2.50
9	5	6	**Wake Up or Blow Up.** *Frank C. Laubach. Revell,* $2.00
8	10	7	**Rufus Jones Speaks to Our Times.** *Edited by Harry Emerson Fosdick. Macmillan,* $4.00
7	8	8	**By the Way: An Autobiography.** *Francis J. McConnell. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $3.50
		9	**Go Inquire of the Lord.** *Gerald Kennedy. Harper,* $1.50
		10	**The Church Militant.** *Harold A. Bosley. Harper,* $2.00

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE American section of the World Council of Churches met in Buck Hill Falls, Pa., to consider what should be the over-all theme of the great Assembly to be held in Evanston, Ill., in 1954. It found itself divided over an issue that has enlivened theological seminaries and religious literature for the past generation, namely, the nature of the Christian hope as applied to this world. The controversy arises from the existence of two schools of Christian thought commonly called liberalism and neo-orthodoxy. The school of liberalism generally conceives the social hope in terms of progressive leavening of human society by the gospel in a process leading to the goal of an ideal or utopian social order. Neo-orthodoxy challenges this conception as illusory, unfounded in historical experience, and alien to the Christian faith as disclosed in the New Testament. It became evident at Buck Hill Falls that the neo-orthodox interpretation would, in all probability, dominate the Evanston program. The question was raised as to the effect this would have upon the American churches whose "social gospel" has been conceived for half a century in the framework of liberalism, and has been motivated by the hope of making the world better and better until the Kingdom of God would be realized in temporal history. It will come as a shock to American Christians who have known nothing else than the liberal tradition to learn that this very conception is rejected by Christians of Europe and other countries, who place the fulfillment of the Christian hope beyond history and associate it with a final judgment and the second coming of Christ. It is clear that the Evanston event is likely to thrust this theological issue into wide public attention not only of the churches but of secular thought as well.

World Council Preliminaries

The Book of the Month

FAITH AND HISTORY, *by Reinhold Niebuhr. Scribners, $3.50.*

GOD'S GRACE AND MAN'S HOPE, *by Daniel D. Williams. Harper, $2.75.*

IN VIEW of the imminence of what may prove to be a historical theological debate at the Evanston Assembly of the World Council, I have decided not to recommend a new book this month, but to name two books that appeared about three years ago. Each of these has a direct bearing upon the issue discussed at Buck Hill Falls, and certain to be the central theme for consideration at Evanston if the program as currently planned for the Assembly is carried out. Every minister will surely sense the importance of being mentally prepared to gain as much as possible from the presense in our country of this great ecumenical conference. I suggest the most careful study of these two books as the best way to begin such preparation. Dr. Niebuhr is the foremost representative of the neo-orthodox point of view in this country. His book presents the most thoroughgoing argument known to me against the liberal conception of the Christian hope. "History," he says, "remains morally ambiguous to the end . . . There is not a single bit of evidence to prove that good triumphs over evil in this constant development of history." Dr. Williams meets this argument head on. Both liberalism and neo-orthodoxy, he says, "have left something out which is the very basis of all Christian experience. This is the fact of redemption." His book is the exposition of this thesis of divine grace as the ground of the Christian hope for progress in this world. Both books are closely woven argumentation, but neither is beyond the grasp of any reader of The Pulpit.

A Thought for the Month

THE ACT of preaching requires to be continually revitalized with fresh imagination. It would be a godly exercise if every preacher in the quiet of his study would make a diagram of the position in which he will stand next Sunday morning when he rises to preach. Let him adopt the simple technique of the cartoonist and draw dotted lines running from himself to a score or two score from his probable congregation. Then let him reflect that these lines run not alone from him to his hearers, but from them to him. They convey the hopes and needs and expectations of living people who are frustrated, tempted, bereaved, anxious, disappointed, trying to make the best of stubborn circumstances. They are lines of communion between him and that many human souls. He will open the Bible and send its word of light and healing and hope down these lines to their hearts. He will open the door into the Holy Presence not so much to pray *for* them as to make articulate for them their own prayers which meet in him. Then he will open his mouth to preach. Has he something worth saying? Something worthy of their expectation? Is it important—the thing he is going to say? Important not merely to him, but to them? Here is no casual routine exercise. Here is an event, a high event, pregnant with the possibility of salvation.

The Sermon as An Event

Charles Clayton Morrison

For the Record—

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of the coming annual denominational issue next August, which appears on page 22, brings up the question of the denominational balance which occurs in these pages during the other eleven months of the year.

Our longtime readers cannot help but be familiar with our policy to print the best in contemporary preaching regardless of denominational source. So as we read the hundreds of manuscripts which cross our desk, our first question is: Is this an effective sermon? By this we mean, Is it geared to meet the spiritual needs of our time? Does it convey its message in clear, understandable English? Does it lead the human heart and mind into a closer understanding of the will of God?

Wide Representation

As we review the back numbers of The Pulpit for the past several years, we find that we have accepted such sermons for publication from every section of the United States and Canada as well as from a growing number of contributors abroad. Practically every denominational family has been represented in our columns. While the great majority of our sermons have come from the major Protestant communions, we have also printed some splendid sermons from some of the smaller church families such as the Church of the Brethren, the Friends and the Church of the Nazarene. To these must be added the sermons of our Orthodox colleagues. Our experience has pointed to the fact that good preaching is not confined to any single denominational stream.

Nor should our readers be unmindful of our widely representative board of editorial associates listed in the adjoining column. These men represent the outstanding leadership of our Protestant and Orthodox world. Their suggestions and sermons have added greater stature to the pages of The Pulpit.

An Ecumenical Force

All of this means that this monthly journal is among the many current forces which reflect and, we hope, help to influence the growing ecumenical spirit of our time. In these pages each individual contribution enriches the total homiletical life of the world's English-speaking religious leadership.

While we plan to continue the idea of devoting the August issue each year to the best sermons from a single denomination, our readers can be assured that their contributions will continue to be welcomed regardless of their theological identification or geographical location.

A. M. M.

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